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THE TIMES

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FRIDAY MARCH 31 1995

RK

'Unholy alliance of failed and failing'

Aitken rejects attack on gun sales to Iran

By NICHOLAS WOOD AND ANDREW PIERCE

JONATHAN AITKEN appeared last night to have survived the latest threat to his ministerial career after securing the support of John Major and Conservative backbenchers against claims that he was involved in supplying arms to Iran in the 1980s.

Challenged in the Commons over suggestions that he knew an arms embargo was being broken, Mr Aitken robustly defended his personal integrity and denounced his chief detractor as a "deposed and bitter man".

He also condemned *The Independent* newspaper for pursuing the allegation that as a non-executive director of the Grantham weapons firm BMARC, he had known that naval guns sold to Singapore were destined for Iran. "What we are seeing here is an unholy alliance of a failed chairman and a failing newspaper, and it's no reason to challenge my integrity or my position in this Government," Mr Aitken, the Chief Secretary to the Treasury, told MPs.

His remarks were a direct assault on Gerald James, the former chairman of BMARC and its parent company Astra Holdings, and indirectly on Tim Laxton, the accountant whose byline appeared on *The Independent's* reports. Mr Laxton audited the Astra Holdings and BMARC accounts while working for the London firm Stoy Hayward.

Mr James claimed on Wednesday that it was common knowledge among BMARC directors that its guns were bound for Iran. He said Mr Aitken would have had to



Aitken: No evidence against him, says Major

have been blind and deaf not to have known about the £13 million export order delivered from 1986 to 1989.

And Mr Laxton denied last night that there was any conflict of interest between his work as an accountant and his journalism. "While I am a fully paid-up member of the Institute of Chartered Accountants, I don't practise," he said. "I am trying to forge a career as a journalist. It is not a question of breach of confidence. The information was in the public domain. That fact that I worked with the companies and knew the people involved had nothing to do with the fact that I wrote this story."

Stoy Hayward were criticised by the Department of Trade and Industry over its preparation of the Astra account between 1986 and 1989, and Mr Laxton left the company in December 1990. The audit firm is now planning to take legal advice over whether Mr Laxton was in breach of

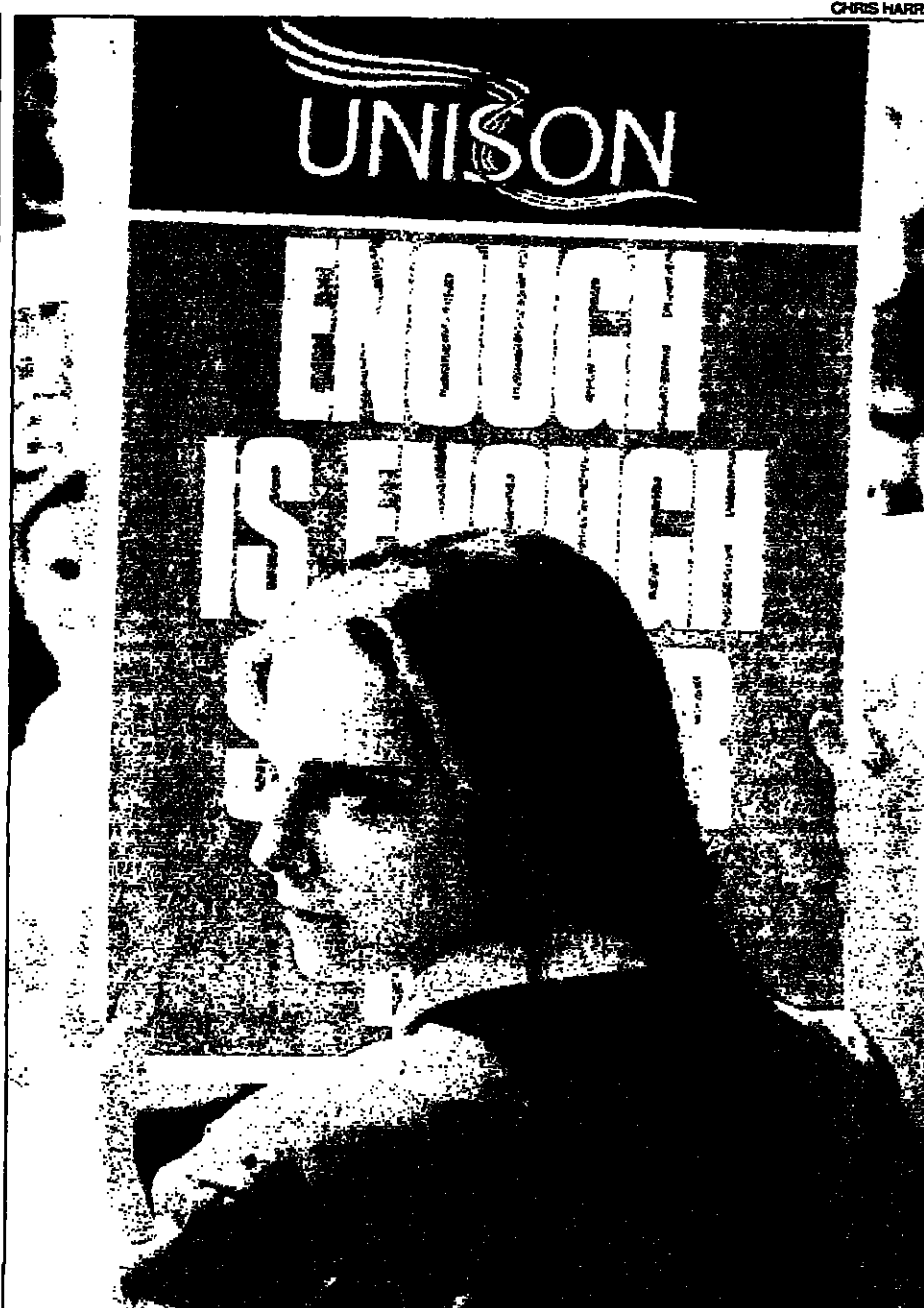
the accountants' code of conduct, and a complaint is being made to the Institute of Chartered Accountants. Even after an employee has left an accountancy company, he is bound by an oath of confidentiality unless he can prove it is in the public interest to disclose confidential information.

Mr James has claimed that there is documentary evidence in company minutes that Mr Aitken attended a crucial board meeting in 1988 when "Project List" was discussed. Mr James was supported yesterday by John Anderson, another former director of BMARC, which went into receivership in 1992. He said: "It beggars belief that a man like Jonathan Aitken, with such expert knowledge of arms and the Middle East could claim to be in the dark about the destination. He must be naive or not the expert he is cracked up to be."

But four other former directors have backed Mr Aitken's version of events and he was boosted yesterday by private messages of support from former BMARC employees. Major-General Donald Isles, who was in charge of Project List, said: "He would not have known the arms were going to Iran. That magic word Iran was never used around the boardroom table." Astra's former group finance director, James Miller, agreed. "Iran was never mentioned," he said. "I don't think that Jonathan Aitken, an alleged multi-millionaire, would risk his

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A nurse getting her message across outside Great Ormond Street hospital, London

Mass demos over NHS pay

By JEREMY LAURANCE AND ALICE THOMSON

NURSES, midwives, ambulance men and ancillary workers were among tens of thousands of NHS workers at more than 400 demonstrations around the country yesterday, protesting over their proposed pay rises.

They were calling for a 3 per cent across-the-board rise rather than the 1 per cent

recommended by the Pay Review Body, with trusts negotiating up to 3 per cent locally. In Winchester 300 nurses marched through the town centre, and in Ilford, Essex, 200 district nurses were led by a Scottish piper. Virginia Boston, the country home in Surrey was targeted by NHS staff, who travelled from London to post their pay demand through the Health Secretary's letter box. The

Royal College of Nursing described the demonstrations as "carnival-like", but said that nurses felt "ground down".

In the House of Commons John Major defended the pay offer as "scrupulously fair", telling MPs that the Government had provided extra money for the NHS to meet the increases.

Letters, page 17

Major supports Canada on fish and widens EU controversy

By PHILIP WEBSTER AND WOLFGANG MÜNCHAU

JOHN MAJOR risked a clash with the European Union yesterday by siding with Canada in its increasingly bitter fish dispute with Spain. The Prime Minister appeared to depart from the Government's position of neutrality between Europe and the Commonwealth by publicly backing Canada's tough action against Spanish trawlers.

Britain's diplomatic breach with Spain widened as British officials in Brussels blocked retaliatory action against the Canadians. At the same time a new threat by EU ambassadors of sanctions against Canada seemed to be undermined by Mr Major's clear indication that Britain would veto such a move.

Mr Major's remarks pleased Conservative MPs, who have been pressing him to put Commonwealth ties before EU responsibilities. But he balanced his remarks by emphasising the need to reach agreement over quotas, and warning Canada not to undermine its "good case". He was referring to the Canadian action of cutting trawler nets, criticised by William Waldegrave, the Agriculture Minister, as dangerous.

His intervention came amid signs of progress in the negotiations between the EU and Canada. After yesterday's meeting in Brussels of EU ambassadors the European Commission said progress was being made, and Spain's ambassador to the EU, Javier Elorza, said: "Canada has changed tactics. It seems they want to negotiate seriously."

British ministers believe that a solution is within reach on enforcement and the size of catches, provided that both sides negotiate sensibly and avoid provocative statements. The EU ambassadors sent a stiffly worded letter to Ottawa, including the threat of new

sanctions. It accused the Canadians of failing to observe the "behaviour of responsible states" by pursuing unilateral action outside the internationally recognised 200-mile limit. In response to the latest clash between Canadian patrol boats and a Spanish fishing vessel in the Great Banks, the Commission wrote: "Any repetition of unilateral action by Canada would be bound to have consequences for the relations between the European Union and Canada likely to extend beyond fisheries."

Senior Elorza voiced anger over the failure to impose sanctions and Britain's stance. "Spain will ask for the immediate application of sanctions if Canada repeats its aggression," he said, claiming that the EU could embark on

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sanctions as early as this weekend.

The EU's letter also contained allegations that the Canadian authorities may have provided false evidence in their investigation of the Spanish trawler *Estai*, whose capture earlier this month triggered the dispute.

In the Commons however, Mr Major said he understood and shared the desire of Canada to preserve fish stocks. "I believe Canada is quite right to take a tough line on enforcement. But I hope she does not undermine her good case. There have been discussion about trade sanctions. We have made it clear we would strongly oppose the imposition of trade sanctions."

In Brussels, the sanctions plan founded on British opposition and fears that sanctions could damage relations with a country that is a close friend of Europe.

Water firm repays £90m to customers

By ERIC REGULY

PRIVATISED water companies came under strong pressure last night to offer customers better prices after North West Water confirmed that it was giving £90 million back to its customers.

Most of the ten large privatised companies said they had no plans, however, to follow North West, whose rebate will give customers £6.50 a year for five years; it is also to offer shareholders a special dividend of 3.8p net over the next five years. The company will also launch a £180-million investment programme to cure problems such as low pressure and sewer flooding. Yorkshire Water said it would unveil a

similar package by early June. The value of the rebates, special dividend and investment is expected to be at least £150 million.

North West is the first of the companies to act to deflect mounting criticism of the failure of utilities to pass on to the public the benefits of privatisation. Its move follows the debacle in the electricity industry caused by Trafalgar's bid for Northern Electric, including the promise of special dividends to Northern's shareholders, which was followed by intervention by the industry regulator to tighten price controls.

North West will pay the first £6.50 rebate in June, but has not decided what form it will take. The company said almost half of its customers would see a fall in their annual bill or an increase below the rate of inflation. Those who move out of North West's region will be sent a rebate at their new address.

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Squeeze feared, page 25

TOMORROW IN THE TIMES



WEEKEND

Ben Macintyre on Nicky Ingram on death row

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THE SIX-SECTION

TIMES - 30p ON SATURDAY

Sterling lifts on Bundesbank cut

By JANET BUSH, ECONOMICS CORRESPONDENT

THE Bundesbank stunned the financial markets yesterday by cutting interest rates. As a result, the dollar gained more than three pence against the mark, and sterling jumped more than five pence before settling with a gain of three pence against the dollar.

On the stock market, the FTSE 100 index closed 33.9 points higher at 3,176.2. The interest rate cut was widely seen as an attempt to ease severe tensions in the exchange-rate mechanism.

The Bundesbank cut its key discount rate from 4.5 per cent to 4 per cent, and a key money market rate by 0.35 per cent.

The bank's move could not have been more unexpected. For weeks a clutch of European currencies, including the pound, have hit record lows against the mark. So severe has the rout on the currency markets been that there were even rumours, hotly denied, that Spain for one may have to leave the ERM.

The Bundesbank had an opportunity to move rates two

weeks ago, when currency turmoil was at its height, but chose not to. This week the US Federal Reserve decided not to increase American rates despite the dollar's severe troubles. It was assumed that if the Fed was not prepared to defend its own currency the Bundesbank would not oblige.

George Magnus, chief economist at S.G. Warburg, said that yesterday's action was designed less to help the dollar than to provide a temporary lifeline to the ERM. The German move would probably have little impact on British interest rates, he added.

The pound's recent weakness has been cause for some concern at the Bank of England because it raises prices for imports. Kenneth Clarke, the Chancellor, and Eddie George, Governor of the Bank of England, held their regular monthly meeting to discuss rates next Wednesday.

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Market Report, page 22

Pools firms score a £45m boost

The Government will today announce a £45 million bonus to the football pool companies to try to compensate for the effect of the National Lottery: the pools betting levy will be cut from 37.5 per cent to 32.5.

The move follows an estimated 15 per cent loss of revenue by Littlewoods, Vero and Zetters since the lottery launch in November. The concession will be introduced as a Clause to the Finance Bill, which is expected to complete its Commons stages by Wednesday.

Charities lose £71m, page 6
Unicorn saved, page 29

'Spin twin' Tony Lock dies at 65

Tony Lock, who took 174 wickets for England, died at home in Western Australia yesterday. He was 65. One of England's "spin twins" with Jim Laker, was on peak form in the 1950s, when Surrey won the county championship seven successive times. Last month he was cleared of child sex charges in Perth. Page 35
Obituary, page 19

EU rejects scheme to replace British hallmarks

FROM WOLFGANG MÜNCHAU IN BRUSSELS

BRITAIN yesterday succeeded in persuading the European Union to reject a German-led attempt to replace the centuries-old British system of hallmarking gold and silver with a system of self-certification by manufacturers.

Earl Ferrers, the Consumer Affairs Minister, rejected an EU directive to harmonise Europe's differing systems of hallmarking as "unacceptable". He

told a meeting in Brussels that Britain's high standards of hallmarking, considered the toughest in Europe, would have been jeopardised if the directive had been approved. Several consumer ministers from other member states complained that Britain's system was too bureaucratic and unnecessary, but Ireland, Holland, Portugal and Austria supported Britain.

The Assay Offices, which are responsible for hallmarking jewellery manufactured in Britain, was set up

700 years ago as an independent guarantor of quality. All imported jewellery must also pass through the Assay Office for inspection and stamping before it can be sold, although the European Court of Justice ruled last September that equivalent hallmarks from other countries could be allowed under certain circumstances.

Earl Ferrers said later: "Hallmarks are a great form of consumer protection. Anything less is unacceptable." Draft legislation which sought to bridge the gap between Britain's

Assay Offices and German industry-based standards would have "undermined" the British system.

"The fact is that Germany's standards are too low for us and ours are too high for Germany. In common parlance we are between a rock and a hard place."

"I made it clear the UK wants to retain the high level of consumer protection we have established." The prospects of agreement when the ministers next discuss the issue in the autumn are not good.



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Jeff softens up the rebels for a kicking from Mutt



Clarke: the hard man

THE Commons yesterday saw two escapes, a sad case of soundbites interrupted, and a slight mugging. The Chancellor mugged some Euro-rebels, Tony Blair was interrupted in mid-soundbite, and Jonathan Aitken and Greville Janner got clean away.

To the Chancellor first. The Tory Whips are hoping to break the Rebel Nine, force them to turn Queen's evidence, and corral them back into the Tory fold. One police technique is called the "Mutt and Jeff" or "hard man, soft man" method. The soft man, Jeff, enters the cell, assures the prisoner he's on his side, but warns that his colleague Mutt breaks arms. Mutt kicks open the door, roughs the prisoner up and departs. Jeff

returns, offers a cigarette and suggests the prisoner come half way, to forestall Mutt's return.

In this drama, Michael Howard, the Home Secretary, is playing Jeff, and Clarke is playing the hard man. The Nine have had a friendly meeting with Jeff, himself a Euro-sceptic. Mutt Clarke has rebuffed them, refusing even to speak to them.

Yesterday at Treasury Questions he kicked Tony Marlow (Whipless, Northampton N) in the shins. Marlow suggested Britain was better outside a single currency.

Wouldn't the Chancellor at least see him to discuss it? "Is his door open?" Clarke pointedly refused to say Yes, and



MATTHEW PARRIS POLITICAL SKETCH

sharply rebuffed Marlow's view. Then he cuffed Nicholas Budgen (Whipless, Wolverhampton SW) round the ear for suggesting the ERM had been bad for Britain. "A myth," barked Mutt.

Next, for both bruised rebels, comes a glass of cognac with sympathetic Mr Howard.

And now to Mr Blair's little personal problem. His soundbites are not coming as they should.

Ideally, a Commons exchange should build gradually, climaxing in a soundbite.

But on Tuesday, during an exchange about rail privatisation, Mr Blair's soundbite came too early, half way through his second question when nobody was expecting it and before cameras and notebooks were ready.

He withdrew in confusion, abandoning his third question.

Yesterday, maybe due to anxiety, the soundbite didn't come at all: or, rather, it was just beginning (during an exchange about nurses' pay) when he was interrupted. Some Tory shouted "Come on

Forrest!" (or was it "Come on Forrest" from a Nottingham MP?), and by the time Miss Boothroyd had calmed everyone down the soundbite was ruined and Blair never tried to get it going again. His third question was depressingly limp: post- (not to say anti-) climactic.

Next, to Mr Janner's escape. Greville Janner (Lab, Leicester W) has been under fire (as chairman of the select committee looking into fat cats' pay) for himself running a company advising fat cats on PR. He rose yesterday to question Major. A dozen Tory yobs filled their lungs to heckle. There was an expectant pause.

Janner started. The heckles were half way up the yobs'

throats when, to their horror, the word "Belsen" appeared in Janner's first sentence. He was deploring racist thugs in Leicester.

You can't boo a man who's just said Belsen. You could almost hear the yobs' cheated sigh. The old fox had got away — again.

And finally to Jonathan Aitken's break-out, reported elsewhere in *The Times*. It was assured, persuasive and sharp.

Labour's Andrew Smith was ill-advised to give the Chief Secretary his "in" cue. Victor of the hour, Aitken stood there, the ground firming beneath his feet as he spoke, and the glass ceiling sliding silently into place above his head.

Rules on roadside signs to be relaxed

The Department of Transport announced yesterday that it intended to widen the definition of businesses allowed to publicise their facilities on local roads. John Wans, Minister for Railways and Roads, said "all reasonable requests for signs will normally be met".

At present tourist attractions can apply to erect a sign only if they attract a certain number of visitors and have been approved by a regional tourist board.

However, the Automobile Association said too many signs would distract drivers and cause accidents. Countryside campaigners expressed concern at the prospect of signs spoiling lanes and villages.

Former MP dies

Sir Charles Irving, the former Tory MP for Cheltenham, died yesterday after a long illness. The 71-year-old bachelor was a founder of the Gloucestershire Aids Trust. His death comes six weeks before the trial of Dr Clive Froggatt, a GP and one of Sir Charles's close political associates, on charges of supplying heroin.

Obituaries, page 19

Kirov top of bill

The Kirov Opera is expected to be the star attraction of the 1995 Edinburgh International Festival. All 275 members are travelling to Scotland to perform three operas, including a concert performance of Glinski's *Russian and Lullaby*. Sir Charles Mackerras will be conducting Mozart's *Don Giovanni*. The festival runs from August 13 to September 2.

Shop murder

A 75-year-old man was beaten to death in the small shop he had run for more than 40 years near Coleraine, Co Londonderry. Mai McLeister, a widow, had his hands tied behind his back before being struck about the head. His body was found by a bread delivery man yesterday morning. Police said that he had been attacked during the night.

Bus deaths fine

The driver of a double-decker bus which hit a low railway bridge in Glasgow, killing three Guides and two of their leaders, was fined £750 for careless driving. Campbell Devlin, of Cathcart, had been following a car driven by another Guide leader. He was cleared last week at Glasgow Sheriff Court of causing the five deaths by dangerous driving.

Jail forecast

The number of prisoners in jails in England and Wales is expected to rise from 51,569 to 56,000 by 2002, according to government figures. The adult male sentenced population will reach 31,600, sentenced young male offenders 7,000 and the remand population 15,400. The Prison Service may use military camps and floating barges if the figures rise still further.

Triple death fine

An inexperienced minibus driver was fined £200 yesterday by Harrogate magistrates after a fatal accident last May in which two cub scouts and a scout master were killed. Michael Holgate, 53, admitted careless driving. The hired minibus was carrying a party of cubs when it hit a coach carrying Army cadets on the A59 in North Yorkshire.

Car walkout

The chairman of the Ramblers' Association has resigned in protest at an attempt to strike a sponsorship deal with a car maker. Alan Howard said he could not agree with supporting a mode of transport that caused such environmental damage and killed and maimed thousands of people each year. The British sponsorship deal fell through.

Shepherd frees grant schools to take bank loans

By BEN PRESTON, EDUCATION CORRESPONDENT

GRANT-maintained schools will be free to borrow money on the commercial market under plans unveiled last night by Cillian Shepherd.

The Education Secretary disclosed that more than 1,000 state schools which have opted out of local authority control will be given the right to borrow from the banks in an initiative to boost the flow of private capital into the public sector. The proposal, part of the Government's legislative programme in the next Parliament, will give ministers the opportunity to turn the spotlight on to Labour divisions over opting out after the decision by Tony Blair, the party leader, to send his son to a grant-maintained school.

Mrs Shepherd said in a Commons written reply: "This measure opens the way for increased business investment in schools." She added: "Local Education Authorities can already, within limits, borrow commercially and fund their school capital programmes from a mix of capital receipts, revenue monies and borrowing. Grant-maintained schools are at present almost entirely dependent on central Government grants."

Mrs Shepherd said grant-maintained schools "have demonstrated that they are able to manage their own budgets effectively and it is right that they should be able to benefit from the flexibility



Shepherd: unveiled plans

such legislation will bring. Vital school assets must of course be protected."

At present grant-maintained schools cannot borrow cash from the commercial market or be granted any mortgage, charge or other security over their property. Loans by the Funding Agency for Schools, the Government quango which distributes grants, are available only in limited circumstances.

David Blunkett, the Shadow Education Secretary, said such arrangements should ensure that all schools were treated equally. "We have been studying how public/private partnerships could help finance capital projects for all schools, and we are continuing that investigation."

he said. Ministers are still working on details of how their plans might work in practice. They are attempting to draw up tight guidelines which would minimise the risk of schools forfeiting buildings or other assets if they were to default on a loan.

Supporters argue that the proposals would, for example, allow a school to take out a loan to build a leisure centre or swimming pool and to pay it back by charging entrance fees to the public outside school hours. However, senior figures in the Funding Agency for Schools remain sceptical that the proposals would bring a substantial influx of private capital into schools.

One member of the agency's board with a private sector background maintains that few commercial organisations regard state schools as a rich seam of financial opportunity. Universities have already been encouraged to raise money for capital developments from private sources. Lancaster University announced last week that it had raised £35 million after launching itself on the bond and gilt market to pay for new halls of residence for students. It will also use the money to build a graduate school. Some 18 other universities plan to follow Lancaster's example.

Inspectors fail test, page 5

Major to fight for middle class votes

By NICHOLAS WOOD AND PHILIP WEBSTER

JOHN MAJOR will today launch a media blitz aimed at wooing Middle England back to the Tory fold.

Amid opinion polls indicating that the middle classes are defecting to Tony Blair's moderate new Labour Party, the Prime Minister will mount a political fightback centred around one of the biggest annual gatherings of his party faithful.

His keynote speech to the Conservative Central Council in Birmingham on Saturday will be sandwiched between high-profile television appearances in which he will seek to rebuild bridges with disaffected Tory voters.

Mr Major's message to the conference, to be staged under the slogan "Real Values, Real Value", will be that despite the difficulties of the past few years, only the Conservatives can deliver their yearning for a strong nation founded on free enterprise, a minimum of government interference in their lives and a tough approach to crime.

This morning, at the BBC's Pebble Mill studio, he will settle down on the sofa for *Good Morning with Anne and Nick*, then don the headsets of Radio WM for a phone-in with the not-so-silent majority of Britain's second city.

Twenty four hours after delivering his speech to more



John Humphrys arriving for work on Radio 4's *Today* programme yesterday for the first time since the Tories launched their attack on BBC interviewers last week

than 1,000 of the party's most senior activists on Saturday, Mr Major will be back at Downing Street recording an interview with *Panorama* to be transmitted on Monday.

Labour has urged the BBC to abandon the 40-minute encounter, which goes out three days before the Scottish local elections, and replace it

with a programme giving equal billing to all the major political leaders. The corporation, however, justified the interview yesterday as "a major news story at a critical time".

Jeremy Hanley, the beleaguered party chairman, will open the conference this afternoon with an attack on Tony

Blair's claim that Labour speaks for the moderate majority. He will be followed at the two-day conference by, among others, Michael Heseltine, Kenneth Clarke and Michael Portillo — all potential future Tory leaders — and Michael Howard, Brian Mawhinney, and John Gummer.

Reservists to gain bigger role in peacekeeping and war zones

By MICHAEL EVANS
DEFENCE CORRESPONDENT

BRITAIN'S 64,000 part-time reservists are to be given an expanded role that will involve them in peacekeeping operations and more rapid deployment to war zones.

Under a draft Reserve Forces Bill, published yesterday, members of the Territorial Army and other Service reservists will also be entitled to payments from the Ministry of Defence to make up for loss of wages if they are called up.

Employers will also be compen-

sated for being deprived of staff who are reservists during a military emergency or peacekeeping mission.

The legislation will affect 59,000 members of the TA, 1,000 Royal Marine reservists, 2,500 Royal Navy reservists and 1,500 RAF reservists.

Under a radical shake-up intended to give the reserves more involvement alongside the regular forces, the part-timers will become eligible for rapid call-up. During the Gulf War, the call-out laws limited the number of reservists who could

be deployed to only a few hundred. Two new categories of reservists would be formed: "high readiness reserves", up to 5,000-strong with special skills that are in short supply in regular units, such as medics and linguists; and "sponsored reserves" to carry out support tasks currently done by regular forces.

The high readiness reserve will consist of 3,000 to 5,000 men and women who sign up for 12 months' service to be deployed at a moment's notice. The sponsored reserve would allow the military to privatise more support tasks and release

regular troops for frontline duties. Malcolm Rifkind, the Defence Secretary, said the proposed changes would not lead to further cuts in the regular forces.

Under the proposals to compensate reservists who are called up, the MoD will make up the difference between a part-timer's military pay and his civilian earnings. Arrangements will also be made for self-employed reservists and those who are members of partnerships. The legislation also allows for reservists to exempt themselves from call-up.

Mr Rifkind said it was impossible at this stage to estimate what the cost might be of paying the extra money to reservists called up for war or peacekeeping missions. He said: "We are very enthusiastic about seeing our reserve forces not simply as an add-on to the regular forces but as an integral part of the armed forces of the UK."

Mr Rifkind said the legislation reflected the increase in humanitarian operations now carried out by Britain's armed forces. About 50 reservists, mainly Serbo-Croat speakers, are involved in United Nations operations in Bosnia.

Training for senior officers in the Armed Forces is to be concentrated at the Joint Service Command and Staff College at Camberley in Surrey, Nicholas Soames, the Armed Forces Minister, confirmed.

In a Commons written reply he said he was standing by the proposal in last year's Frontline First review of the support services to concentrate tri-service senior officer training at Camberley. The RAF college at Bracknell in Berkshire and the Royal Naval college at Greenwich, southeast London, will be closed.

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£700m rail safety system dropped

By JONATHAN PRYNN, TRANSPORT CORRESPONDENT

THE Government has abandoned plans to fit a £700 million high-tech railway safety system recommended by the Clapham rail crash inquiry because it is too expensive. Brian Mawhinney, the Transport Secretary, announced in the Commons that installing the in-cab system, known as automatic train protection (ATP), throughout the rail network could not be justified "because the costs far outweigh the benefits".

The system reduces the risk of accidents by warning train drivers when they have passed a red signal or when they are exceeding speed limits. If the warning is ignored the brakes are applied automatically.

The Government said yesterday that the system would cost £14 million for every life it saved and was already being overtaken by more advanced technology.

Dr Mawhinney was immediately accused of reneging on previous government pledges and putting the safety of passengers at risk through cost-cutting in the run-up to rail privatisation.

Michael Meacher, the Shadow Transport Secretary, said: "The Government has

gone back on an unequivocal commitment to introduce ATP after the Clapham crash and, more importantly, not suggested an alternative. It has already spent over £1.2 billion on privatisation. For half that sum it could have had ATP."

Sir Anthony Hadden recommended the introduction of the system after his inquiry into the 1988 Clapham rail crash, in which 38 people died. The Railway Inspectorate has also recommended its installation after each of the four main fatal rail crashes since.

Cecil Parkinson, the Transport Secretary at the time of Clapham, told MPs that "financial considerations would not stand in the way" of implementing ATP. However, two pilot schemes since then have shown the costs to be far higher than originally estimated and the Transport Department has come under Treasury pressure to justify a national scheme.

An advanced form of ATP is still likely to be introduced on the Channel Tunnel high-speed rail link and on track upgrading projects such as the West Coast Main Line. It will also be included in the Heathrow Express link.

Benefits reform 'puts staff in danger'

By JAMES LANDALE

CIVIL servants working in jobcentres face greater risk of assault when government reforms to the benefit system are introduced, a leaked Whitehall report said yesterday.

The jobseeker's allowance, which will replace unemployment benefit and income support in April next year, will be unpopular and action should be taken to protect staff, the Employment Service report said.

The Employment Department said yesterday that extra measures would be taken to ensure staff safety. The number of physical and verbal assaults in jobcentres has risen from 1,209 in 1989 to 1,445 in 1993.

Alan Milburn, Labour MP for Darlington, who obtained the report, said that the allowance would turn jobcentres into fortresses. "Ministers have deliberately ignored warnings about threats to the safety of staff confronted by the fury of claimants facing benefit cuts," he said.

Aitken defence

Continued from page 1
parliamentary career for a £10,000 salary he got from us."

Mr Aitken got further backing from the Prime Minister in the Commons yesterday when a Labour MP asked if Mr Aitken was a fit and proper person to serve in the Cabinet. Mr Major retorted: "He has made his position absolutely clear. No evidence has been found to counter that, either by *The Independent* newspaper or by anybody else."

Earlier, during Treasury questions, the Labour frontbencher Andrew Smith asked Mr Aitken if he believed he had the confidence of the country. He replied: "Yes I do. And I believe so because the facts are clear." There was no indication either at board meetings or documents to suggest that BMARC's legitimate contract with Singapore might result in components going to Iran.

"My view of these matters has now been publicly supported by four former directors — including General Isles, who was responsible for the contract, and the former managing director — so the deposed and bitter chairman is now isolated on his own in making irresponsible comments."

Mr Aitken was confident last night that the controversy had made him stronger not

weaker, saying he had been sure the Commons would accept his version of events seven years ago when he was a backbencher.

Mr Aitken's position was further boosted yesterday when it was disclosed that the Scott inquiry into arms sales to Iraq would not be investigating him. The inquiry has already looked at Project Lisi and ruled it was outside its remit; papers supplied by Mr Aitken had not changed that view.

The receivers Coopers & Lybrand were, however, enraged that minutes of the board meetings attended by Mr Aitken had been leaked. The firm said it had provided copies to Mr James to assist his defence against possible disqualification as a director. But Mr Laxton had also obtained copies. Mr James said last night: "I don't know where he got them from. He was the first to telephone me about Mr Aitken's involvement."

Ian Hargreaves, Editor of *The Independent*, said he could not comment on where the documents came from. "The story came from several sources, including Tim Laxton." He has worked for us on stories before; we have been working with him on this story before."

Politics, page 7

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British fugitive suspected of sixth killing

BY MICHAEL HORSNELL AND STEWART TENDLER

TWO missing Britons are now feared to be among the victims of a serial killer who has struck in three countries, according to police in Singapore, who named John Scripps, an escaped British prisoner, as prime suspect.

The dismembered bodies of two Canadians, an American and a South African have already been identified.

Police holding Scripps, 35, from Letchworth, Hertfordshire, in a psychiatric unit at Changi prison said they were concerned for the safety of William Shackel, a London accountant, only 24 hours after listing the disappearance of Timothy McDowall, 23, a financial consultant.

Missing-persons reports on the two men, who are both from south London but understood not to have been acquainted, have been filed with Mexican federal police.

Mr Shackel, who had been on holiday in the Mexican town of Cancun, has not been heard of since travellers' cheques worth £4,000 were cashed there on the same day. Scripps, a convicted drug smuggler, was said by police to have been in Cancun during the same week. He is being held on a murder charge concerning the death of Gerard Lowe, 32, a South African chemical engineer whose body was dismembered and thrown into Singapore harbour. Mr McDowall, a graduate of Trinity College, Cambridge, disappeared in January while on an extended holiday to America and Mexico.

Parts of bodies discovered on the Thai island of Phuket have been identified as belonging to a Canadian tourist, Sheila Damude, 49, and her son Darin, 23. Their passports and credit cards had allegedly been found on Scripps.

Police in San Francisco also want to talk to him about the murder of a homosexual whose remains were found in the city last year.

Scripps absconded from The Mount Prison in Hertfordshire last October after serving half of a 13-year sentence for smuggling heroin.

Park Lane drug dealers flew Concorde to build an empire

BY STEWART TENDLER, CRIME CORRESPONDENT

SENIOR members of the world's largest crack cocaine ring, who used a Park Lane apartment as a base and flew on Concorde posing as business executives, were convicted yesterday of planning to flood Britain with the drug.

Southwark Crown Court was told that the gang leaders kept apartments in Mayfair and New York and shopped with platinum credit cards.

When police struck they found 5.5kg of crack cocaine worth over £1 million at the luxury apartment in Park Lane, central London. The drug had been processed in microwave ovens and laid out in slabs to dry on an antique writing table in the master bedroom. It was the biggest recorded single crack cocaine find by any police force in the world.

Police believe a further 18.2kg of crack had passed through the hands of the gang, led by a group of Ghanaians.



Andre N'Guessan



Charles Oppen

They had made at least £5 million and laundered large sums of cash through West End branches of Thomas Cook so often they were nicknamed "the money bag people". Although suspicious because of the huge sums, Thomas Cook staff allowed the transactions to continue after police told them of their investigations.

Marianne Keita, 30, the number two in the ring, who was 8½ months pregnant and had the crack haul in her Park Lane home; Andre N'Guessan, 34, the network's distributor, of Bryanston Square, Mayfair; and Charles Oppen, 36, his lieutenant, of Streatham, south London, were remanded to await sentencing next month after being found guilty of conspiracy to supply the drug. All were using false identities and police are trying to find their real names. They were warned by Judge Rivlin, QC, that they faced "substantial terms" of imprisonment.

Detectives from the South East Regional Crime Squad are also still searching for the ringleader. Keita's husband Chanda Keita, Detective Inspector Gordon Harrison said that an arrest warrant had been issued for the man described in court as "highly intelligent, charming and very obviously well heeled".

Mr Harrison said: "There is no doubt he is a Mr Big in the international drugs world and is believed to be the most prolific crack dealer to have come to the attention of police anywhere in the world."

Police believe that if they had not smashed the 18-month drug operation, Chanda Keita would probably have realised his dreams of going legitimate. He had already bought an ice cream factory, a canner and sweet-making machinery for an industrial estate he hoped to set up in his native Ghana.

Mr Harrison said the Keitas and N'Guessan flew everywhere either by Concorde or first class. Between January 1993 and June last year, the Keitas visited Mali, Bangkok, the Ivory Coast, Denmark, Switzerland, France, America and Italy.

They cultivated "an executive school of body language".



Marianne Keita in her missing husband's £500,000 apartment in New York

Mr Harrison said: "They really worked on their image, deliberately flying in the best seats with expensive luggage and using executive lounges at airports simply to cultivate an aura of respectability."

Keita and her husband, who have three children, shopped in top stores with platinum credit cards and stayed in the best suites of the best hotels. In New York they kept a £500,000 apartment.

During the trial, the court

was told the drugs trail probably started in Bangkok, from where heroin consignments were smuggled to New York. It was swapped for cocaine, which was brought into Britain, usually by Keita, who converted it to crack.

Mr Harrison said of the Park Lane haul: "Not only was this the largest ever single seizure of the drug in Britain, but according to the Drug Enforcement Agency in America they have no record of a

larger haul anywhere else in the world." Documents on other consignments provided the first clues as to the true size of the ring's operations. Mr Harrison said: "It alarmed us. The amounts they were dealing in shocked us. Our investigation and the arrests that followed undoubtedly broke a big and well-established network of crack production and distribution in Britain and has dealt a major blow to this terrible industry."

Academic tries to save English emigrant from electric chair

BY DOMINIC KENNEDY

A BRITISH expert in death will try to save an English-born American from the electric chair next week by describing to an American court how it feels to die by electrocution.

Nicholas Ingram, 31, a convicted murderer, can expect to remain conscious for several minutes while his body suffers massive electrical shock, according to Dr Harold Hillman, 64, who has devoted the past 35 years to studying death, dying and resuscitation. Dr Hillman, reader in physiology at the University of Surrey, was yesterday preparing an affidavit for a New Orleans court and is to give evidence on Monday by telephone.

Ingram is due to be executed at 7pm next Thursday but a campaign to save his life is gathering momentum. The Prime Minister was said to be considering a written request from Ingram's mother asking him to seek clemency from President Clinton during a visit to Washington next week.

Anne Campbell, the Labour MP for Cambridge, where Ingram was born, is seeking a parliamentary debate and two English human rights lawyers are planning to fly to the United States to plead for his life.

Dr Hillman has given evidence in the cases of eight other killers on America's death row. Most were saved from the electric chair, either getting life imprisonment or a lethal injection, a form of execution described by Dr Hillman as "no more painful than if you have a tooth taken out under anaesthetic."

Electrocution is compared by the academic to the medieval torture of holding a victim's hand in boiling oil and refusing to let it be freed. "The Americans believe that the mass of high current causes the person being electrocuted to go unconscious immediately and therefore feel nothing," Dr Hillman said.

His studies indicate that the victim is merely paralysed

by the electric shock but continues to experience great pain. "A person in pain moves voluntarily but they can't because they are paralysed by this huge electric current. The Americans don't believe it is painful because they cannot see the effects of the pain on the people."

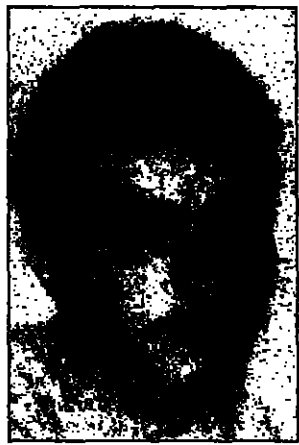
"You cover the face of the person being electrocuted so you can't see them sweating, drooling and vomiting, their eyes sticking out and their faces going blue."

Ingram's mother Ann has written to Mr Major: "Obviously, I do not want my son to die by any means. But to think that, as the sun goes down here in Georgia, Nicky will be strapped into the electric chair is more than a mother can bear."

There is confusion over the status of Ingram, who was born in Cambridge but moved to America aged 18 months with his British mother and American serviceman father. Campaigners say he is British but the Foreign Office described him as an American citizen "in the country of his second nationality". Britain had "no formal legal standing to intervene".

Ingram was convicted in 1963 of tying a middle-aged couple to a tree as he burgled their home, then shooting them. The man died but his wife survived.

□ In Weekend tomorrow: 12 years on death row



Ingram convicted in 1963

Thai bride killed 'voodoo' husband

BY KATHRYN KNIGHT

A YOUNG Thai woman stabbed her English husband to death believing he was using witchcraft to kill her so that he could sell their baby daughter abroad, a court heard yesterday.

For Enicknap, 31, who met her husband, David, through a dating agency in Thailand, stabbed him with a ten-inch kitchen knife in the garden of their home in Woking, Surrey, as neighbours looked on, the Old Bailey was told.

Enicknap sobbed in the dock as an interpreter related the events of July 25 last year. She denied murder but admitted manslaughter on the grounds of diminished responsibility.

The court heard that Mr Enicknap, 40, a driving instructor, met his wife in Thailand in 1991 and married her in October the same year. The couple moved to England three months later, and were happy until the birth of their daughter, Julie, in December 1992. Heather Hallett, QC,

said that after the birth, Enicknap, who had a strong belief in the occult, began to suffer from paranoid delusions and believed that her husband wanted to kill her and sell their daughter abroad. "The delusions became wilder and wilder. She believed in black magic and thought her husband was using it on her, burning wax and matches on a model of the baby," said Ms Hallett. "All the allegations against her husband were unfounded. He was a mild-mannered man devoted to his family."

In April 1993 Enicknap was admitted to a psychiatric hospital but discharged herself. She also left the marital home on a number of occasions.

On July 25 neighbours found Mr Enicknap lying half-naked on the lawn trying to plug wounds to his neck and stomach, with his wife standing near by. As they watched she stabbed him again.

Enicknap was remanded in custody for medical reports.

Bowbelle captain maintains silence

BY EMMA WILKINS

THE master of the dredger *Bowbelle*, which collided with the *Marchioness* pleasureboat on the Thames nearly six years ago, stopped giving evidence to an inquest jury yesterday after just 90 seconds for fear of incriminating himself.

Douglas Henderson, who has already been cleared of criminal charges of failing to provide a proper look-out on board, was advised by John Burton, West London Coroner, that he need not answer any incriminating questions. Bereaved families and survivors of the disaster, in which 51 people died, said later they were distressed that someone so closely involved with the accident was not answering important questions.

After confirming his name and that he was captain of the *Bowbelle*, Mr Henderson, who has never given evidence in public before, told the coroner that he had been advised not to answer any questions.

However, after checking

with Michael Caplan, his counsel, Mr Henderson confirmed that he had been interviewed by the Marine Accident Investigation Branch and police officers. He also confirmed that he had seen his statements to the investigation branch and the police and that they were correct.

Mr Burton adjourned the inquest at Hammersmith Coroner's Court until today for discussions in chambers with counsel for all parties involved.

Earlier Mr Caplan had told the inquest that Mr Henderson would be invoking his privilege not to answer incriminating questions under Rule 22 of the Coroner's Rules. Mr Henderson, who was 31 at the time of the disaster, was attending the hearing voluntarily, Mr Caplan said.

Mr Henderson became master of the *Bowbelle* in May 1989, three months before the collision on the Thames. He was cleared of criminal charges after two juries failed to reach verdicts in 1991.

BBC suspects Eurovision nobbling

BY ALEXANDRA FREAN, MEDIA CORRESPONDENT

THE BBC suspects that there may be an attempt to rig the voting in tonight's Eurovision Song Contest. A *Song For Europe*. The corporation has laid contestants that they will be disqualified if they try to cheat.

Kevin Bishop, executive producer of tonight's programme, wrote to agents and record companies working for the eight contestants in the show, after becoming suspicious that a lobbying firm was planning to bombard the BBC's switchboards with calls in favour of one of the acts.

Jonathan King, the broadcaster and record producer drafted in by the BBC to help to run the event this year, said that producers began to suspect foul play last week, when a lobbying firm mistook the date of the show's transmis-

sion and tried to vote a week early. "Unfortunately the company who tried to do it was so stupid that they got the date wrong and ended up dialling a number that was being used for a *Tomorrow's World* competition," he said.

A BBC spokeswoman said: "We will be able to tell where the calls come from, so we would be able to tell pretty quickly if somebody were trying to cheat." As the BBC usually receives about 500,000 votes in the contest, anyone wanting to rig the result would have to enlist thousands of supporters.

Samantha Fox, the former model who hopes to become the first British winner since Bucks Fizz in 1981 with her song *Go For The Heart*, said: "If the BBC has found out something then I'm glad that it is trying to put a stop to it. If



Fox: fair and square

I'm going to win, I'm going to win fair and square—I think I have proved that by all the hard work and preparation I have put in over the past month."

Kelly O'Keefe, 18, the lead singer with Deuce, said: "I would personally hate to win

by a rigged voting system. We think our song is good enough to make the viewers vote of their own accord."

Mr King has declared his intention to turn the contest, which brought such hits to the world as *Boom-Bang-A-Bang*, *La La La* and *Diggy Doo Diggy-Do*, into a showcase for some of the more challenging strains of modern British pop. Viewers nostalgic for the days when *A Song For Europe* was an icon of sadness need not be concerned, however. The chorus of Love City Groove's entry, imaginatively entitled *Love City Groove*, runs:

Oh baby
Oh baby, oh-oh
Oh baby
Oh baby
Urrrrr.

The winner of tonight's contest will represent Britain in the Eurovision Song Contest, to be held in Dublin on May 13.

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The way he works you'd think he had something to prove.

Anton Guzara works for DKS Packaging, a company that manufactures tins.

He has limited movement of his hands, and his facial disfigurement was caused by burns when he was younger.

Neither his hands nor his face have stopped Anton being an excellent employee.

In fact, his enthusiasm for work has rubbed off on everyone else.

In the two years he's worked for DKS, Anton has never been late or taken a day off in sickness.

At the moment, he's employed as the company troubleshooter and fills in wherever he's needed.

One of his colleagues said jokingly, "There's really only one thing Anton can't do at work, that's sing in key."

DKS have never had any reservations about employing people with disabilities. Their attitude is to judge people by their abilities, not their disabilities. That's why they use the disability symbol.

Freephone 0800 567 667 (minicom 0800 444 265) for a leaflet which will tell you about the symbol.



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School inspectors earn poor marks for composition

ONE in eight school reports produced by the Government's new inspection regime is misleading, incomprehensible or inadequate, according to a study published yesterday (Ben Preston writes).

Ofsted, the Office for Standards in Education, criticised the work of freelance inspection teams it employs to monitor the quality of lessons at more than 5,000 schools each year. Some are writing baffling reports that are long on waffle but short on analysis. In his annual report, Chris Woodhead, the Chief Inspector of Schools, acknowledged that the new £67 million system has suffered "teething troubles". His most acute problem is remedying a shortage of inspectors required to visit each of the 19,000 English primary schools at least once every four years.

Regular inspection by Ofsted is the cornerstone of government reforms designed to make state schools more accountable. Under the system, parents are sent a summary of

Hungry minds

Subsidised school breakfasts are to be provided for primary school children in Cleveland in an attempt to improve academic performance. A pilot scheme costing £40,000 aims to see if children work better when they start the day with a proper meal.

the inspector's observations, but yesterday's report says some of these misled parents. They do not match the original closely and offer a different impression of the school.

The report says that while 23 per cent of freelance inspectors' full reports were excellent, some 13 per cent were unsatisfactory. Weaknesses included "poor style, use of jargon; lack of clarity, particularly when conveying judgments; too much description at the expense of evaluation; a failure to comment on issues required; a lack of consistency

between various sections in the report". The report adds that inspectors had also been found to misrepresent or misinterpret evidence, particularly in their overall conclusions or recommendations.

Mr Woodhead said Ofsted was moving into a second phase after establishing the new system: "We are now concentrating on issues of quality and service, as well, of course, as making sure that we hit our inspection targets."

David Blunkett, Shadow Education Secretary, said the report showed significant number of primary and nursery schools were not to be inspected as Ofsted fell behind schedule. "This is a further admission that the Government's privatised inspection service is not working. Primary schools have been losing out," he said.

An Ofsted spokesman said inspectors writing unsatisfactory reports tended to "jump before they were pushed". Six freelance inspection team leaders had resigned.



Back to work: Donna Ward with her son Arron, six, yesterday

Wren sacked for being pregnant resumes career

By MARIANNE DARCH

NAVAL history was made yesterday when a former Wren who was forced to leave the service nine years ago after becoming pregnant returned to work. Donna Ward, 33, fought for her career instead of compensation after becoming pregnant with her son James in 1986.

When she disclosed she was pregnant Mrs Ward was ordered to leave her post as a naval steward. The action was in line with policy which was subsequently reversed because of European sex discrimination legislation. Mrs Ward, who now has three children, won an industrial tribunal case in January and was awarded £2,000 for "injuries to feelings".

She is the first Wren to be reinstated into the Navy, which she joined at the age of 17. During her 6½-year career she served for six months in Northern Ireland with 45 Commando Royal Marines. Returning to work yesterday at HMS Nelson in Portsmouth, Mrs Ward said:

"This is all I've wanted for the last nine years. I'm just delighted to be back. I do hope that other Wrens sacked for being pregnant will see that they can resume their careers if they want to."

Mrs Ward, whose husband Alan is also in the Navy, described the day she received her discharge papers as the worst of her life. "People don't understand why I didn't try to get compensation like all the others who were sacked for becoming pregnant," she said. "I come from a naval family and all I've ever wanted to do was be in the service."

Law lords reject TV soap stars' claim for libel

By FRANCES GIBB, LEGAL CORRESPONDENT

TWO former stars of the television soap *Neighbours* lost their battle for libel damages yesterday over "deeply offensive and insulting" headlines and photographs that accompanied a newspaper article.

Five law lords upheld a 1993 Court of Appeal ruling that the allegedly defamatory nature of the headlines and photographs in the *News of the World* were not alone sufficient for a claim to succeed.

Ian Smith and Anne Charleston, who played the respectable married couple Harold and Madge Bishop in the Australian series, issued a writ against the newspaper after it published a report headlined "Strewth! What's Harold up to with our Madge?" in March 1992.

The larger of two faked pictures depicted "Madge" lying on her front with "Harold" astride her in a position they claimed suggested he was committing an indecent act, while the smaller picture appeared to be of Madge wearing a leather garment which exposed her breasts.

The captions and the report made clear that the photographs had been produced by the makers of a pornographic computer game in which Smith's and Charleston's faces had been superimposed, without their knowledge, on to pornographic actors' bodies.

The law lords, while condemning "gutter journalism", said the context of the article had to be considered as a

whole and in this instance the article was not capable of being libellous. However, they warned: "Those who print defamatory headlines are playing with fire."

Lord Goff of Chieveley, Lord Bridge of Harwich, Lord Jauncey of Tullichettle, Lord Mustill and Lord Nicholls of Birkenhead unanimously agreed that the Court of Appeal had been right to block the libel claim.

Lord Bridge said the actors found the article "deeply offensive and insulting", adding: "Many people will not only deplore this kind of gutter journalism but will think that the law ought to give some redress to the plaintiffs against the publication of such degrading faked photographs irrespective of what the accompanying text may have said. I have considerable sympathy with this point of view."

Lord Nicholls observed that "newspapers get thicker and thicker" and everybody read selectively, scanning the headlines and turning pages. "Those who print defamatory headlines are playing with fire. The ordinary reader might not be expected to notice curative words tucked away further down the article."

He said none would have thought any the worse of the *Neighbours* actors but "the ordinary reader might have thought worse of the producers of the pornographic computer game and the *News of the World*, but that is a different matter".

Flying Economy?

Now you're in Business.



Ian Smith and Anne Charleston — Harold and Madge

Sniffer dog rescues trapped pot-holer

By A STAFF REPORTER

A POT-HOLER trapped in caves 1½ miles underground was rescued yesterday after being found by a sniffer dog. Sophie, a Labrador, is believed to be Britain's first dog trained to trace victims underground.

A search party had failed to find Simon Evans, 27, after he was cut off by an avalanche of sand in Dan yr Ogof caves, Powys. He had entered the cave system with a fellow caver on Wednesday night but they became separated and the alarm was raised when Mr Evans failed to surface by midnight.

The South Wales Cave Rescue team spent two hours searching the ten miles of caves before Sophie was brought in. Mr Evans, an electrician from Abercraf, Mid Wales, was found trapped in a narrow tunnel.

He was treated for hypothermia after rescuers used ropes to pull him free.

Sophie's owner, Ashford Price, 53, said: "Sand had collapsed on his back, and he couldn't go forwards or backwards. He was in the first stages of hypothermia, and was in danger of running out of air."

He added: "I've been a pot-holer in these caves for more than 25 years but Simon was in a section I have never been to. But Sophie knew exactly where to find him and as we got closer we could hear his feet tapping against a cave wall as a distress signal. She saved his life — the air in the cave was foul and he was running out of oxygen."

Mr Price said he hoped more underground sniffer dogs would now be trained by other rescue teams.

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Encyclical attacks contraception, fertility treatment and euthanasia

Pope speaks out against society's 'culture of death'

By RUTH GLEDHILL, RELIGION CORRESPONDENT

THE Pope yesterday condemned society's "culture of death" where abortion, contraception, embryology and euthanasia are contributing to a "profound change in the way in which life and relationships between people are considered".

In an encyclical, one of the most authoritative forms of teaching of the Roman Catholic Church, the Pope speaks of the "extremely grave and disturbing" destruction of humans still to be born or in their final days of life.

Cardinal Basil Hume, Archbishop of Westminster and spiritual head of Britain's 4.4 million Catholics, said yesterday that he was "200 per cent" behind the encyclical, which is morally and ethically binding on Catholics.

Cardinal Hume said that society was abandoning respect for human life. "My plea is that society should stop and ask, where could all this lead?" In the document *Evangelium Vitae* or The Gospel of Life, the Pope rules out *in vitro* fertilisation for Catholic couples where it would cause the death of an embryo.

The Pope restates categorically the Catholic position that human life begins from the moment of conception, and that contraception is "evil".

He describes a "variable structure of sin" where the powerful are at war against the weak. "A person who, because of illness or handicap or, more simply, just by existing, compromises the well-being or lifestyle of those who are more favoured tends to be looked upon as an enemy to be resisted or eliminated. In this way a kind of conspiracy against life is unleashed."

The Pope defends the Church against the accusation that it promotes abortion "because it obstinately continues to teach the moral unlawfulness of contraception".

Conceding that abortion and contraception are "specifically different evils" because one opposes justice and the other opposes chastity, he says: "The pro-abortion culture is especially strong where the Church's teaching on contraception is rejected."

He says that contraception and abortion are in many instances "rooted in a hedonistic mentality unwilling to accept responsibility in matters of sexuality". He says: "The life which could result from a sexual encounter thus becomes an enemy to be avoided at all costs."

Cardinal Hume, launching the 189-page encyclical at



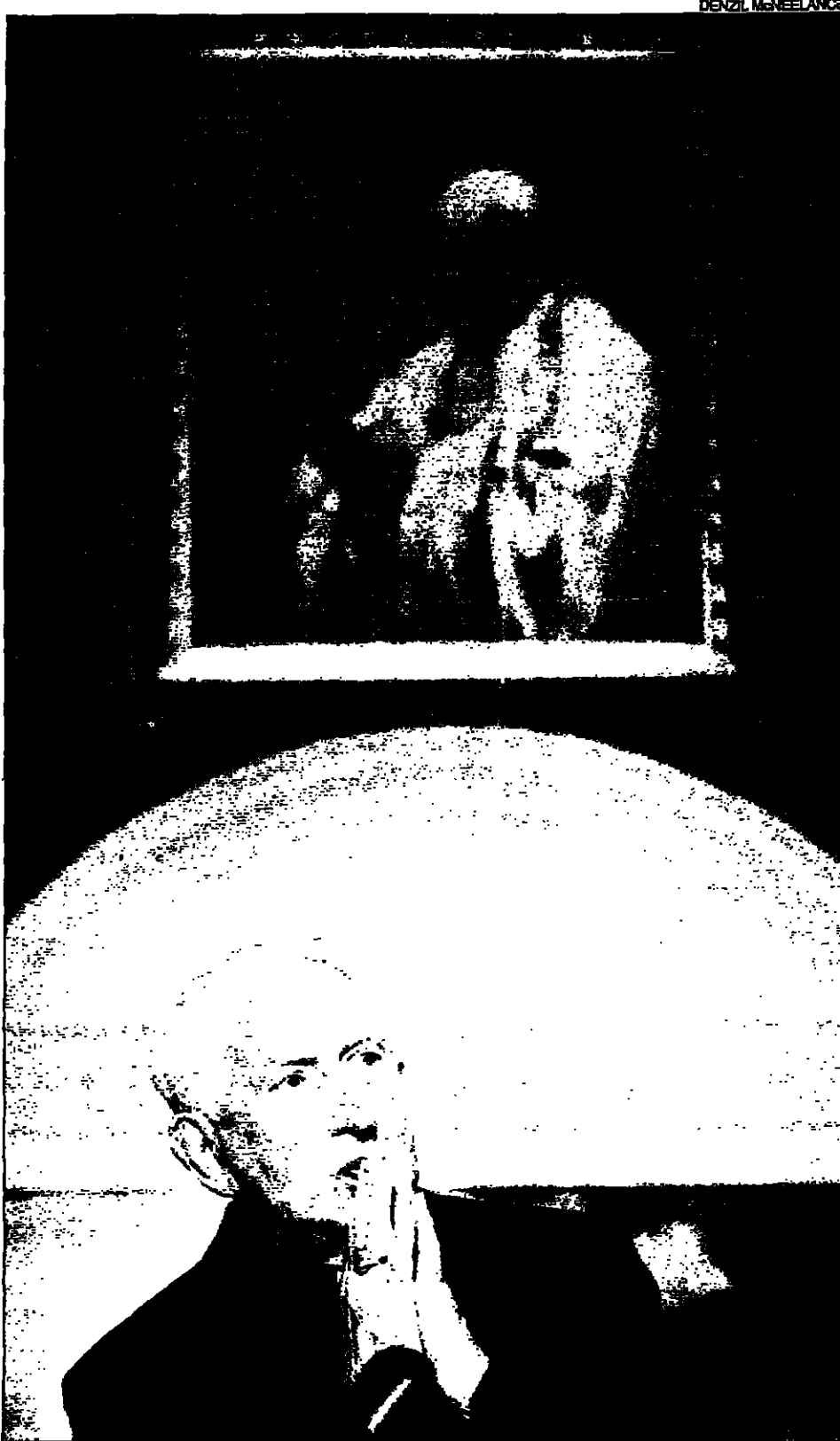
Widcombe: grateful

Archbishop's House, Westminster, central London, said: "I find the whole of this authoritative statement to be an inspiring exposition which goes to the heart of the most fundamental moral question there is: the value of human life." He warned against a society in which "life is cheap", and said he feared the elderly and disabled were at risk through euthanasia and abortion.

Cardinal Hume continued: "This is a very important, authoritative document carrying the full weight of the Holy Father's support for what the bishops throughout the world teach. No Catholic is free to dissent from what is taught."

Ann Widcombe, MP, who converted to Catholicism two years ago, said: "I am very grateful to belong to a Church that is not afraid to restate verities in the teeth of contemporary fashion. It is very easy to sacrifice faith to fashion and creed to compromise. Truth must be absolute." Life, the "pro-life" campaigners, said the encyclical was "a magnificent rebuff to the culture of death that afflicts much of the Western world".

However, Ann Furedi, director of the Birth Control Trust, said: "The encyclical makes no attempt to connect with the circumstances in which people live their lives. It seems particularly absurd that in the supposed defence of the sanctity of life the Pope is prepared to condemn thousands of infertile women to childlessness by forbidding the use of the new reproductive technologies."



Cardinal Hume at yesterday's launch of the encyclical, "an inspiring exposition"

Charities lose £71m since start of Lottery

By ALEXANDRA FREAN AND DALYA ALBERGE

INDIVIDUAL donations to charities have fallen by £71 million since the launch of the National Lottery in November, according to the National Council for Voluntary Organisations.

Stuart Etherington, the council's chief executive, said yesterday that, if the decline continued at the same rate, charities and voluntary organisations would lose £212 million this year. With the National Lottery Charities Board expecting to accumulate £155 million in its first year, the result would be a net loss to the sector of £57 million.

The relationship between individuals and charitable giving has been changed by the National Lottery. Significant fundraising methods, such as raffles, have been adversely affected, he said.

The council, which represents 640 national voluntary organisations, is conducting research to track the effects of the National Lottery on charities. It has found that the proportion of the adult population giving to charities has declined from 81 to 67 per cent. There has been a 15 per cent fall in people buying charity lottery tickets and a 5 per cent drop in donors to street collections.

One of the five recipients of National Lottery money, the arts, received its first handouts yesterday from the Arts Council of England. The nine cash-starved recipients included groups large and small, professional and amateur, and spanned the country.

However, almost half the money, £90,000, went to the South Bank Centre in London to fund six months of "developmental" research, in preparation for submitting its eventual bid for £45 million.

Arts, page 29



Barrage balloons over London in 1939

Balloons go down for the last time

By MARIANNE CURRIE

MORE than a century of British military ballooning ends today with the disbanding of the RAF's Balloon Operations Squadron.

A parade in the grounds of the squadron's barracks at Hullavington, Wiltshire, will signal the end of the balloon's distinguished history as the 60-strong squadron — motto, "In silence we serve" — is broken up, partly because the Egyptian cotton from which the balloons are made is no longer available.

Squadron Leader Chris Pickthall said his men were "all deeply saddened to be leaving a job they love". Since 1941 thousands of paras have made their training jump from the balloon platforms 700ft above the airfield. They will now use privately contracted aircraft. "The men will be dispersed around the country to return to their primary duties as heavy goods vehicle drivers for the RAF," Squadron Leader Pickthall said.

The balloons, which cost £90,000 and more than £500 a time to fill with hydrogen, became familiar sights as anti-aircraft barrages during the Second World War. More than 300 were raised around London to force German aircraft to fly at predictable heights so they could then be saturated with anti-aircraft fire.

Balloons were used to break the Siege of Paris in 1870-1 when they made at least 66 flights over the heads of the Prussian Army, carrying 100 people and more than two million letters. British military use of balloons dates to the Boer War. In the First World War they were used as a platform for directing artillery fire.

Boy of five fights off the Aids virus

By NIGEL HAWKES, SCIENCE EDITOR

A BABY boy who caught HIV from his mother has shaken off the virus. Now five years old, the child is healthy and free of the infection, American researchers have reported.

Though not the first case of its kind, the boy is the best documented, convincing doctors that the episode cannot simply be the result of misdiagnosis. The suspicion now is that this may happen more often than is generally realised, and that it could point the way to the development of vaccines against HIV, the Aids virus.

Dr Yvonne Bryson and colleagues from the University of California in Los Angeles describe the case in *The New England Journal of Medicine*. The boy, named as "Baby Paul", was born to a mother infected with HIV, probably from a partner who was an intravenous drug

user. The baby showed no sign of HIV at birth, but tested positive at 19 days and at 51 days. On the second test, the virus was extracted from the samples and its amino acid sequence determined. Subsequently, the child appears to have cleared his system of HIV.

A similar case was reported two years ago by the Institute of Molecular Medicine in Oxford, but at the time diagnostic tests were less comprehensive. Dr Frances Gotch of the institute said that the HIV detection had been by means of cytotoxic T lymphocytes, white blood cells used by the body to fight HIV infection. The child had them at six months, but had lost them by 13 months.

How this happens is not clear. One possibility is that infected maternal cells linger in the infant before being cleared,

but in the latest case that appears unlikely. Another is that the baby's own immune system fought off the infection, but if so it would be remarkable, because such immune systems are immature. Understanding how it was done could help in the treatment and prevention of Aids, the doctors said.

The timing of the use of the anti-Aids drug AZT could improve the chances of babies escaping infection, a British group reports in today's issue of *The Lancet*. Researchers at University College London have shown that AZT attacks HIV effectively within the first two days. In six months, however, levels have recovered. The findings have special implications for HIV-infected pregnant women, since AZT can prevent them passing the virus on.

Giving birth under water as safe as in bed, survey finds

By JEREMY LAURANCE, HEALTH SERVICES CORRESPONDENT

GIVING birth under water is no more risky than having a baby in a hospital bed, according to the first national survey of water births. Nine out of ten maternity hospitals now offer women a water birth and demand is increasing rapidly, according to the Health Department survey.

Almost 13,000 women chose to spend their labour in a birthing pool or conventional bath in 1992 and 1993, and a third of them delivered their babies under water. None of the babies suffered adverse

effects from the water birth. The figures, collected by the National Perinatal Epidemiology Unit in Oxford, show that demand for water births rose by over 60 per cent during the two years, although they still represent only 1 per cent of total births. Twelve babies died and 51 suffered breathing problems and infections. However, none of the deaths or illnesses was related to labour or birth in water.

Mary Renfrew, Professor of Midwifery at Leeds University and one of the authors of the

study published in tomorrow's *British Medical Journal*, urged caution in interpreting the figures and said further studies were needed.

The survey will help to allay fears fuelled by cases in 1993 that received wide publicity; one baby died and another was brain-damaged after underwater labour at St Michael's Hospital in Bristol. The hospital announced it was reducing the temperature of the birthing pool as a safeguard because of worries that it might have played a part.

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MEDICAL BRIEFING

Nurse who made medical history

Dr Thomas Stuttford

JACKIE KEENAN, a 27-year-old Leeds nurse who was drip-fed for 14 months, is again enjoying her meals and looking forward to going home from St James's Hospital, Leeds, where the small bowel transplant operation she has had has made British surgical history.

Jackie has familial polyposis, a dominantly inherited disease in which there may be more than a hundred pre-malignant tumours carpeting the large intestine and rectum. By the age of 40, in untreated cases, one or more of these tumours has usually become cancerous. In order to avoid this the usually recommended treatment is excision of the large bowel in early adult life. Jackie had had this done some years previously and had been fitted with an ileostomy, an artificial opening through the abdominal wall.

In about 15 per cent of cases of familial polyposis the patient also suffers from Gardner's syndrome. In this syndrome the small intestine is infiltrated by desmoid tumours, non-malignant but very painful and potentially lethal growths which, as they grow, can cause obstruction of the gut. Because they press on the intestinal arteries they can give rise to gangrene if the intestinal wall is starved of blood. This was happening to

Jackie and she was admitted to St James's, where she had once nursed. Nobody at the time of her admission would have accepted a bet on the chances of her survival. She was in constant pain, could be fed only by drips, had barely eight inches of small intestine left, was losing a lot of fluid and her liver was failing.

Jackie's only chance was a small bowel transplant. She had inherited the condition from her father but fortunately her mother was fit and happily she was prepared to offer 5ft of her own small intestine.

There has been only one European survivor of the transplant from a living donor — in Kiel, Germany — and one British man survived a similar transplant from a post-mortem specimen in 1992. Stephen Pollard, Jackie's surgeon, decided that the operation could be justified if he used Prograf, a new and more powerful immuno-suppressant made by a Japanese company. Licensed here since 1994, Prograf has been used in liver and kidney transplants where patients were showing signs of rejection despite the use of conventional immuno-suppressant drugs, such as cyclosporin.

Thanks to the drug, everything went according to plan. Jackie is eating again and growing stronger by the day.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Prehistoric fossil 'new species'

A new species of ichthyosaur, a prehistoric fish-lizard, has been found near Lyme Regis, Dorset. The 195-million-year-old fossil was found by Chris Moore, who runs a fossil shop in the town, after heavy rain exposed the rock beneath Gold Cap.

He said yesterday: "This is a totally new species. It is very different, with large eyes and a very tiny jaw. It would have been about six feet long."

Murder arrests

Two more men have been arrested in Birmingham over the murder of Tarzan Singh, 60, Editor of the Punjabi newspaper *Des Pardes*. Four others are on police bail.

Sweet victory

A waitress at the head office of Boots in Nottingham was sacked for eating a mint has been reinstated. Elizabeth Lee, 37, of Clifton, had worked for the firm for 14 years.

Leg damages

John Williamson, 39, a computer teacher and local league footballer, has accepted £400 compensation from Poulfract General Infirmary after a doctor refused to X-ray his broken leg.

Ruth Ellis cheque

A cheque for £5.13s which Ruth Ellis's lover used to pay the bill for a weekend with her at the Oaklands Hotel, Cheshire, six days before she killed him in April 1955, has sold for £605 at Sotheby's.

Four men freed as woman breaks down in rape trial

By RICHARD FORD, HOME CORRESPONDENT

FOUR men accused of the gang rape of a schoolgirl on the bonnet of a car were freed yesterday after the case against them collapsed because the teenager was too distressed to give evidence.

She broke down sobbing in the witness box three times despite screens being used to spare her seeing the defendants. The woman, now aged 19, picked up the Bible to swear the oath but each time managed only to say: "I am unable..." before leaving the dock at Bristol Crown Court.

Nicholas Atkinson, QC, for the prosecution, said the case would have to be abandoned because it turned on the issue of consent. "Without the evidence of the complainant it is impossible to proceed."

Judge Colin Willis directed the jury to acquit the four men, all from Birmingham, of all charges. As the not-guilty verdicts were announced, Gary Cheslin, 25, brothers Anthony Hines, 25, and Mark Hines, 23, all of Castle Vale, and Paul Rotini, 28, of King's Norton, turned to their friends and gave the thumbs-up sign. They had denied committing rape and another serious sexual offence. They said the woman had consented to sexual intercourse.

Mr Atkinson said she had gone to the Gas nightclub in Cheltenham a year ago and after a while she and two friends were aware of being watched by four men. On the way to the lavatory she met Paul Cheslin. She found him attractive and shortly afterwards they were kissing. Mr

Atkinson said: "She was happy to let him kiss her but she did not want to have sexual intercourse with him."

Outside the nightclub Mr Cheslin suggested that she could "have all four of us tonight", Mr Atkinson added. He said the woman was pushed into the car and driven to a car park.

"They raped her while the other defendants were saying 'come on'. Over the next few minutes she was subjected to numerous indignities." The woman, too afraid to shout for help, had "closed her eyes and tried to pretend what was happening was not happening", the court was told.

In his statement to police Paul Rotini had said: "It was like a scene from a sex film." Another told officers they had "ditched her like a used rag".

Outside court, Wayne Benjamin, Mr Cheslin's step-brother, said that they intended to sue the police for wrongful arrest. "This case has ruined them all. They have been in custody 13 months. Despite being acquitted everyone will look at them differently now."

Vicky Abel, a Victim Support counsellor in Bristol, said: "These cases are very traumatic for victims. A woman should be able to give evidence via a video link so she does not have to be in the same room as the men accused of raping her."

Michael Stern, Conservative MP for Bristol North West, said: "Maybe some of the evidence should be given in camera."

Aitken says he knew nothing of arms for Iran — some directors say he did

Businessman MP and the deal that escaped his attention

BY MICHAEL EVANS
DEFENCE CORRESPONDENT

THE Project Lisi affair, codename for a secret deal to sell naval guns to Iran in the 1980s in breach of an arms embargo, has added a new twist to the already complex and politically embarrassing arms-to-Iraq investigation.

Although arms sales to Iran are not part of that inquiry, the new revelations have highlighted other secret deals that appear to have been going on in the 1980s in breach of strict government guidelines on weapons exports. The sale of 140 naval guns to Iran via Singapore, involving a company called BMARC (British Manufacture Research Company), based at Grantham, Lincolnshire, came as Iran and Iraq were at war. The contract ran from 1986, six years after the war began, to 1989, the year after it ended. Throughout the eight years of fighting the export of arms to either side was banned.

Jonathan Aitken, son of a

Spitfire pilot, former journalist, ambitious Tory MP and, most importantly for his prospective employers, a man with unrivalled experience of arms sales in the Middle East and with key political contacts, joined BMARC as a non-executive director in September 1988, a month after the Iran-Iraq ceasefire. Project Lisi, worth £15 million, had already been running for two years. The government arms embargo remained in place.

Mr Aitken stayed with BMARC until June 1990 on a salary of £10,000 a year, leaving, along with other directors, when it ran into financial trouble that led eventually to receivership.

Project Lisi involved the sale of 140 GAM-BOI 20mm naval cannon to Charter Industries in Singapore. The weapons were delivered in containers of form but were later shipped to Iran and ended up on three Iranian frigates and two corvettes. They were also fitted to Iranian fast patrol boats.

The codename was an acronym for Licensed to Singa-

pore. BMARC made the guns under licence from Cerlikon, a Swiss company. Department of Trade and Industry sources have confirmed that the sale of small-calibre naval guns would require an export licence even to Singapore, a Commonwealth country, unless it was a government-to-government arrangement.

The DTI keeps a long list of products that, under the Export Control of Goods Order, require export licences. Companies seeking to export arms have to examine the list then apply for a licence.

However, there would have been few qualms on the part of either the DTI or Customs and Excise, which has the job of "policing" exported products under licence, in approving the sale of naval guns to Singapore because the country is viewed as entirely friendly.

Also, a contract to sell naval guns to Singapore looked legitimate and appropriate. The Singapore navy had missile boats for which a 20mm

cannon with a range of 2.5 miles would have been well suited. Singapore was also in the market for warships and eventually ordered six German-designed attack corvettes. These ships, however, were never fitted with a naval gun as small as 20mm.

To a new director, such as Mr Aitken, arriving two years after Project Lisi had started, the contract appeared to be a straightforward one with Singapore. The key issue today, however, is this: was he told or did he discover that Project Lisi was a cover for selling naval guns to the Iranians?

Gerald James, the former chairman of BMARC, insists that it was common knowledge that the guns would end up in Iran. He says Project Lisi was discussed at board meetings attended by Mr Aitken. "It was a very major contract", he said. John Anderson, a director from 1984 to 1991 of Astra Holdings, BMARC's parent company, also said on the BBC's *Newsnight* that it was "widely known" that the

guns were going to Iran. "You don't keep secrets [in a company], things gradually come out," he said.

However, another director, Major-General Donald Isles, a former director-general of weapons at the Ministry of Defence, says that there was no mention of Iran in the context of Project Lisi, although he admits that there were rumours after the contract was under way. As far as he was concerned — and this is also Mr Aitken's explanation — Project Lisi was an entirely legitimate sale of 140 naval guns to a friendly Commonwealth country. "It was never discussed at board meetings that the cannon was going to Iran," he said. Two other former directors back this line: William McNaught, the former managing director, and Chris Gumbley, former chief executive of Astra.

One key board meeting was on Wednesday November 2, 1988, at BMARC's offices in Grantham. Seven directors were present. Mr Aitken



stayed for four hours of the meeting then left to attend a memorial service. Mr Aitken says that he left before the discussion about the company's order book, which included Project Lisi. He says that he attended two other board meetings, in February and April 1989, Mr Anderson says that Mr Aitken was present at

about nine meetings. Mr James and Mr Anderson are adamant that minutes of all the board meetings, including those that referred to Project Lisi, were circulated to all directors whether or not they had been present. According to the directors who have publicly acknowledged the truth behind Project

6 The key issue is: did he find out that it was a cover for selling guns to the Iranians?

Lisi, the covert nature of the deal is underlined by the fact that the guns were delivered in component form to avoid the need for an export licence. However, DTI sources say that components of a weapon system are included on the export control list and should not escape the licensing laws.

It was on this basis that the infamous "giant steel oil pipes" bound for Iraq were seized by Customs in 1990. They were suspected of being sections for the barrel of a supergun.

Astra Holdings, which bought BMARC in 1988 and went into receivership in 1992, was also involved in the supergun affair, after the company took over in 1989 a Belgian arms firm called PRB, which had a contract to supply propellant for the gun.

Without commenting on Project Lisi, the DTI sources admitted it was possible that some weapons components might "leak" through the gap if they could be presented as non-military.

Former directors fight threat of disqualification

BY JON ASHWORTH

GERALD JAMES, the former merchant banker at the centre of the Jonathan Aitken arms-to-Iraq row, is fighting attempts by the Department of Trade and Industry to have him disqualified as a company director. He and five other former executives of the collapsed Astra group of companies face bans of between two and fifteen years if the proceedings go against them.

Mr James, whose remarks about Mr Aitken's reputed presence at board meetings has fuelled fresh controversy over the MP's dealings, was heavily criticised in the DTI report on the Astra collapse.

The report, published in June 1993, referred to sloppy accounting, rash management and misleading statements from John Anderson, a director of Astra. It referred to a false invoice allegedly created by Mr James, then chairman of Astra, and Mr Anderson, to bolster profits ahead of a stockmarket listing, and said Mr James had been imprudent over his dealings with Stoy Hayward, the company's former auditor. This related to the acquisition of the Belgian arms company PRB.

The DTI inspectors said: "Mr James was insistent to us that the acquisition was fully

discussed and debated by the board members. However, we do not accept that. In particular, we find that there was at no stage any considered collective discussion by all the board members of the Stoy reports and their impact on the proposed acquisition."

Mr James dismissed the DTI report as a smear campaign, saying that he would fight to expose corruption at the heart of government. He said at the time: "If the truth came out, Astra would make Matrix Churchill look like a Sunday school outing."

Mr James later told MPs that he was steered into allegedly overpaying for BMARC and PRB. He claimed that three Astra divisions, traded with Iran during the arms embargo, and spoke of pressure from investors and bankers with military and government connections, a group he dubbed "the Savoy mafia". These were said to include Sir John Cuckney, one-time chairman of 3i and formerly of M&S; John Lehman, a former US Navy Secretary who worked for the US investment house Paine Webber; and Stephan Kock, a former soldier in the Rhodesian SAS who had acted as a consultant to Midland Bank.

The DTI launched proceedings against the Astra directors last summer. Mr James and Mr Anderson face disqualification, along with Christopher Gumbley, Martin Guest, James Miller and Laurence Kingswood. Mr Gumbley, former managing director of Astra, was jailed for nine months in 1990 after he was convicted of corruptly giving a BMW car to a Ministry of Defence official.

It has emerged that Mr James and Mr Anderson recently approached Coopers & Lybrand, the accountancy firm winding up Astra and BMARC, and requested copies of various board meetings and minutes. They said they needed the documents as part of their defence against the DTI proceedings. Coopers & Lybrand released copies of the documents after taking legal advice that it was proper to do so. Those documents appear to form the basis of articles in *The Independent*.

During the 1980s, Mr James built Astra into a diversified group with interests from fireworks to defence. He was forced to step down in March 1990 under pressure from institutional shareholders.



James heavily criticised by DTI



Anderson: accused of attempt to mislead

Kinnock job in doubt

BY ARTHUR LEATHLEY, POLITICAL CORRESPONDENT

NEIL KINNOCK'S future as a European commissioner was put in doubt yesterday as ministers said they might abandon one of Britain's two posts in Brussels.

The Government made the offer as a means of cutting bureaucracy before any enlargement of the European Union. Mr Kinnock, whose

four-year term began less than three months ago, would be the most vulnerable of Britain's representatives as Sir Leon Brittan, the Trade Commissioner, is one of the most senior members of the Commission.

Mr Kinnock, whose wife Glens is an MEP, bought a home in Brussels recently.

IN PARLIAMENT

YESTERDAY in the Commons: questions to Treasury ministers and the Prime Minister were followed by debates on the Contracting Out (Functions in Relation to the Registration of Companies) Order, the local government finance special grant report and the tourism. In the Lords: debates on the

Health Authorities Bill and the EU decision to open up the Irish Box to foreign fishermen. TODAY in the Commons: debates on backbench Bill including the regulation of the diet industry, Bill and the Breast Cancer (National Plan) Bill. The House of Lords is not sitting.



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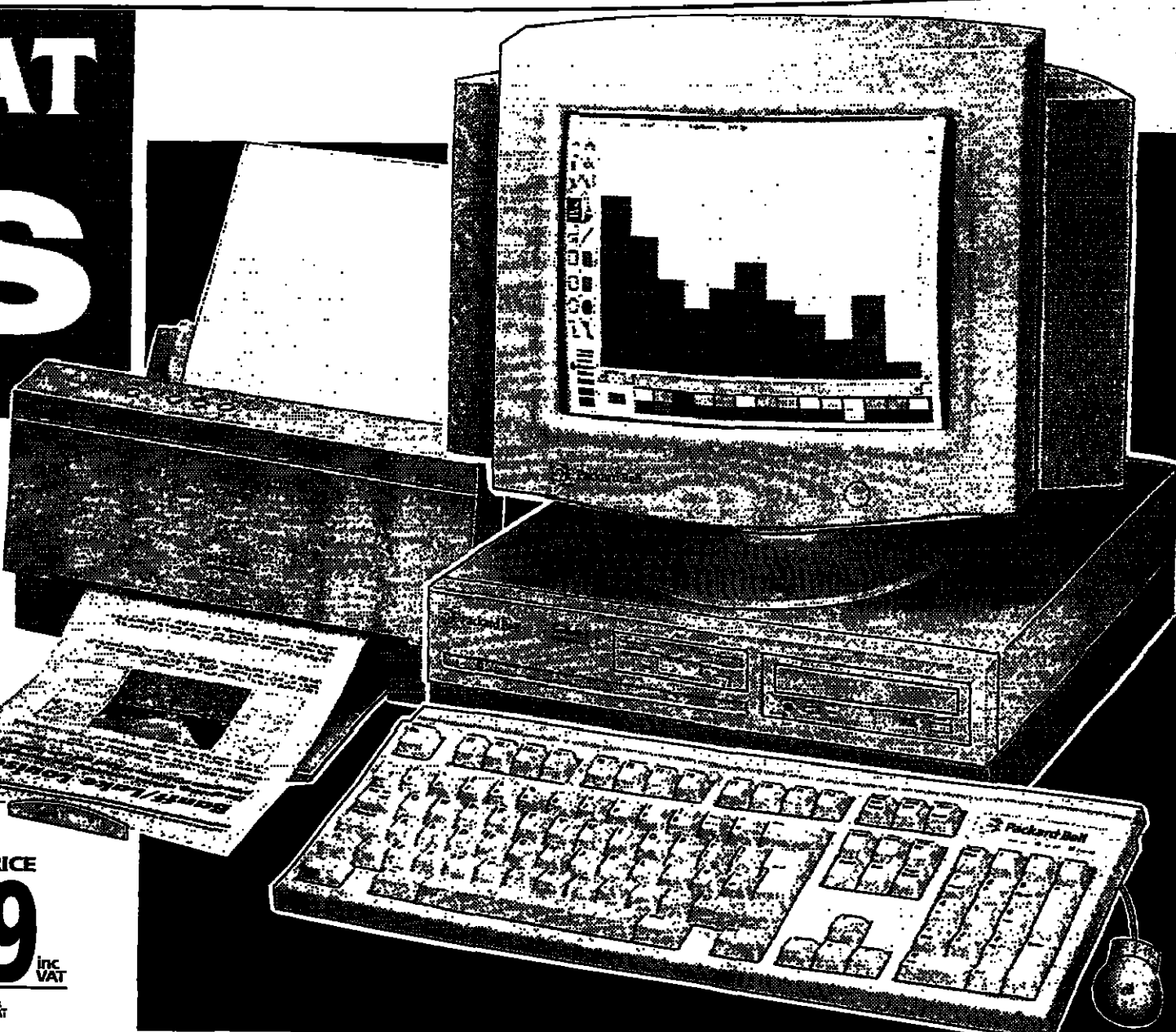
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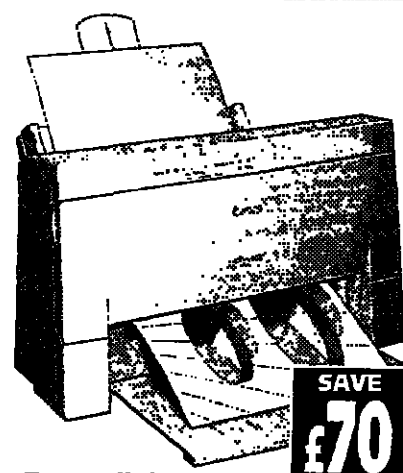
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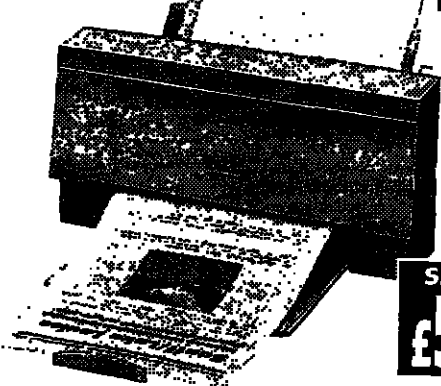
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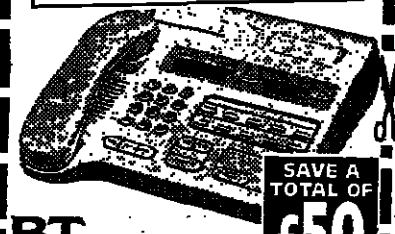
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Gaullist contenders square up for final rounds

Dour Ballardur reborn as 'Doudou' the showman

FROM CHARLES BREMNER IN PARIS

A SECOND wind is lifting the spirits of Edouard Ballardur, France's Gaullist Prime Minister, now that he has managed to climb back into the ring with Jacques Chirac, who earlier this month appeared to have knocked out his presidential dream.

"I think I have managed to get things back on track after the sudden fall in the polls in February and I'm completely confident," he said. "My problem has been to get across the idea that I have something new and am offering change."

M. Ballardur was reviewing his strategy as he started a tour of central Brittany, comforted by evidence that his more aggressive campaign style had helped to halt M. Chirac's rapid ascent. The Paris Mayor and Gaullist party leader still leads by about six percentage points, but with the polls more volatile than they have been in any modern French election, M. Ballardur hopes to eclipse Lionel Jospin, the Socialist, in the first round vote on April 23 and beat M. Chirac in the run-off on May 7.

The Ballardur team even managed to put a positive gloss on yesterday's public transport strike, which paralysed rail, Metro and air services. It was, they said, a sign that the left-wing unions had given up on M. Jospin and that the return of wage demands reflected awareness that France had recovered from recession.

Life as an underdog seems to agree with the fastidious Prime Minister, who tumbled in February from his throne as the "natural" successor to President Mitterrand. At least that is the message that he

wants to convey as he fights M. Chirac's brilliant recasting of himself as a crusading man of the people. The past week has seen an implausible switch in which the aloof M. Ballardur has been reborn with the nickname "Doudou", an aggressive campaigner who can work the streets and farmyards with the best of them.

"My difficulty is that we are living through the end of 14 years of socialism. People unconsciously see me as a continuation"

Surely this must be hard for a man renowned for his refinement and attachment to rank? "Not in the slightest," the Prime Minister said with a laugh. "I have adapted to the circumstances and I find it great fun. I appreciate the warmth people are showing towards me. I find it very reassuring."

The 65-year-old M. Ballardur, who has governed for two years of "cohabitation" with M. Mitterrand, said he has been handicapped by his inexperience. "The polls went down hard in February because the Government had difficulties and all the others went for me. They are still at it. They don't attack each other, just me." Running the Government has been a distraction, he said. "I'm not complaining, just pointing out that half my time is spent as Prime Minister."

"My main difficulty has been the fact that we are living through the end of 14 years of socialism. Because I've been in power, people unconsciously see me as a continuation." M. Ballardur is stung by what he

sees as a failure to acknowledge his achievement in bringing France out of recession and cutting an unemployment level which is still the highest of any comparable country. "But people are taking more notice now, there is a sort of new awareness and they also don't like some of the methods being used by others." This

comment was aimed at M. Chirac's portrayal of himself as a champion of change against the "immobility" of the Prime Minister who took over at his request after the conservative parliamentary victory. M. Ballardur is hitting back, highlighting M. Chirac's contradictory promises.

Referring to the absence of any debate about the Euro-

pean Union, M. Ballardur said that M. Chirac had borrowed his own position as someone who believed in deeper union without federalism. The Gaullist favourite caused surprise earlier this month when he broke with his more Eurosceptical stance and backed monetary union and other common policies.

M. Ballardur said that if he wins the presidency, he will work to make sure that Britain is "closely associated" with France's continuing commitment to partnership with Germany.

As he returned to the campaign trail, M. Ballardur was acclaimed by 5,000 supporters at an American-style rally in the small town of Loudéac. He responded with an energetic, unscripted speech complete with arm-waving and awkward grins. The performance was still no match for M. Chirac's showmanship, but it was eons away from the old regal style.



Edouard Ballardur at a sports stadium in Paris on a break from his election campaign

Strikers disrupt transport in France

FROM AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE IN PARIS

AIR, rail and Paris bus and Métro strikes plunged France into chaos yesterday, causing prolonged delays for commuters and fuelling political tension in the run-up to next month's presidential elections.

Only the Channel Tunnel Eurostar service and the Paris-Lausanne high-speed trains were running normally. The strikes, some over salary rises, came amid a wave of industrial disputes as unions take advantage of the election campaign to press home their demands of the future president.

Only a quarter of mainline trains were running across France, the domestic airline Air Inter cancelled half its flights while the Paris Métro and bus networks were down by an average of 30 per cent, severely disrupting the economic life of the capital.

An 18-mile traffic jam built up during the morning rush hour on the Paris ring road. Motorways leading into the capital had a total 30 miles of queues.

Zero hour for UN leaves Bosnia with little hope of peace

BY MISHA GLENNY

AS FIGHTING spreads like a malignant tumour in several parts of Bosnia, this evening's expiry date of the United Nations mandate in Croatia threatens to go unnoticed.

Two weeks ago Croatia's President Tudjman announced with great pomp that Croatia had decided to allow the UN to stay in Croatia after all, thus heading off the possibility of increased conflict between Serbs and Croats.

But as zero hour approaches the parties are still as far apart as ever on the substance of a revised mandate for the UN, which Zagreb is insisting on if the peacekeeping force is to stay. Two proposals for a new mandate have been floated, one by Boutros Boutros Ghali, the UN Secretary-General, and one by the US State Department.

But earlier this week Mate Granic, the Croatian Foreign Minister who is the leading moderate in the Zagreb Government, stated that these were unacceptable.

The main stumbling block is that the Croats are adamant that the UN must prevent the Serbs in the so-called Krajina enclave from receiving military supplies from Serbia and the Bosnian Serbs. The Krajina Serbs, not surprising-



Granic: rejected new peacekeeping plans

ly, reject this, a stance that has put the UN in an awkward position. If the Serbs and Croats stick to their positions, the UN forces will be attempting to implement a mandate rejected by both sides.

The Security Council will be voting on a delicately-fudged resolution which states that the UN Confidence Building Operation, Unctro, (as the force is called under the new mandate) will assist "in controlling by monitoring military personnel, equipment, supplies and weapons" across the borders with Serbia and the Bosnian Serb territories.

"At the moment we have no idea what is going to happen," said one senior UN official in Zagreb. "All we know is that the number of ceasefire violations along the 'zone of separation' between the Serbs and the Croats is mounting daily and these now include some fairly serious firefights between the two armies."

The confusion over the new mandate for Croatia comes at a deeply inopportune moment for the various international mediators. In Bosnia the efforts of the Contact Group, comprising Britain, France, America, Germany and Russia, are heading for the rocks. Earlier this week the Contact Group reactivated a proposal known as Plan B, which some cynical observers now refer to as Plan B from Outer Space, which involves persuading Slobodan Milosevic, the Serbian President, to recognise Croatia and Bosnia in exchange for the lifting of sanctions.

Mr Milosevic has made it clear, however, that sanctions must be lifted first and the constitutional relationship between the Serbs in Croatia and Bosnia regulated locally before he will consider recognition.

Given that there have been no meaningful negotiations between the Contact Group and the Bosnian Serbs for several months now, the chances of a wider solution appear less than zero.

Dutch soldier is killed

Sarajevo: A Dutch peacekeeper was killed by shelling near one of Bosnia's fiercest combat zones in what the United Nations said yesterday was probably a deliberate attack.

The soldier, whose name has not been released, was killed late on Wednesday at an observation post in north-east Bosnia near a strategic communications tower.

In another incident a man in his 50s, with dual British and Australian citizenship, who tried to negotiate the safe passage of an aid convoy to Croatia's Bihac enclave, is being held by separatist Serbs, UN officials said.

A convoy spokesman identified him as Mirko Buzak, who emigrated from Croatia in the 1960s. UN officials said they had asked Croatian Serb authorities to release Mr Buzak but had not been able to make contact with him. "There is no need to dramatise the situation. Negotiation is possible," a UN official said. (AFP/Reuters)

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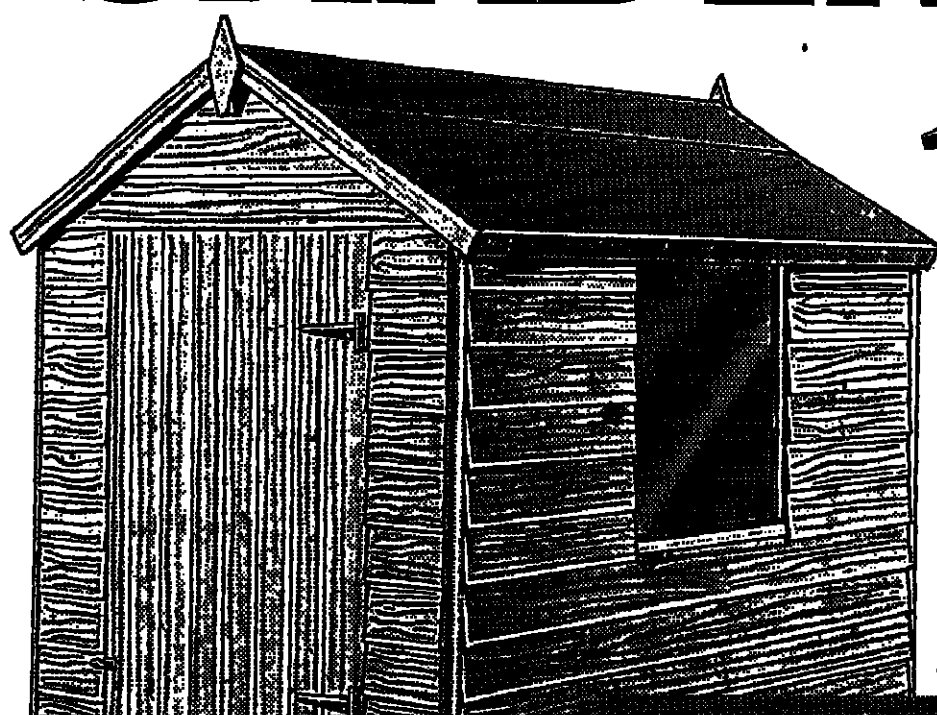
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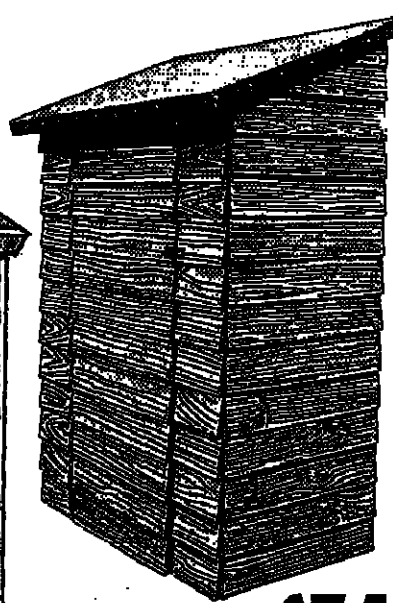


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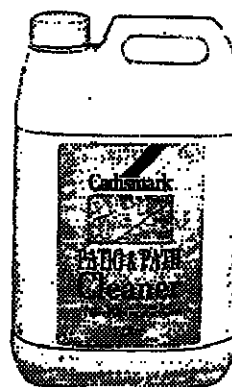
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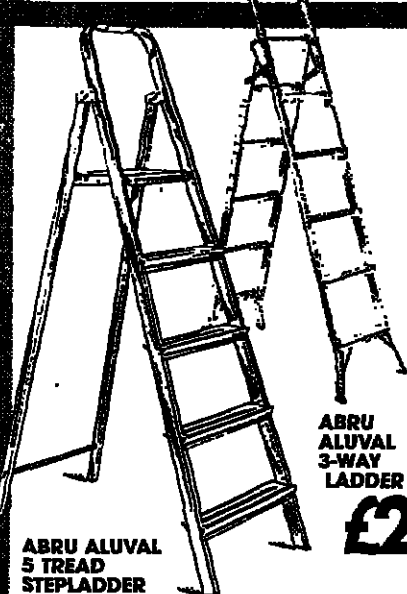
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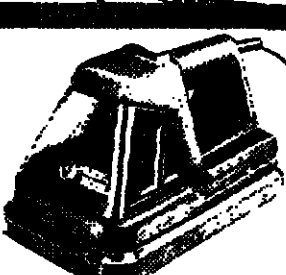
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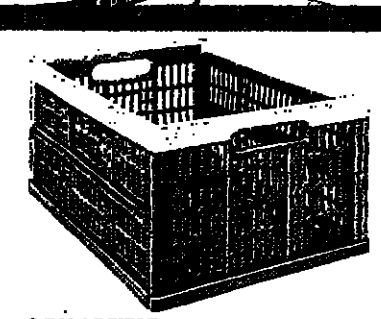
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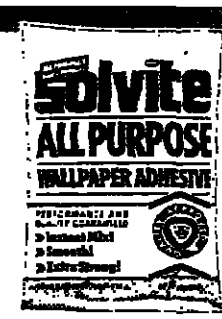
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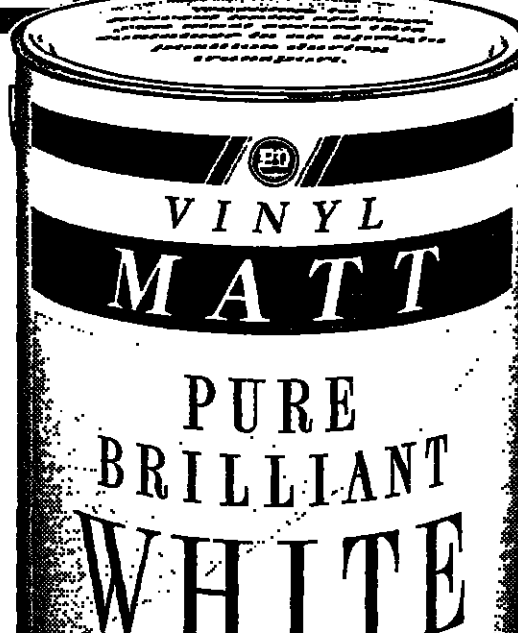
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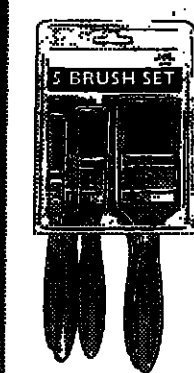
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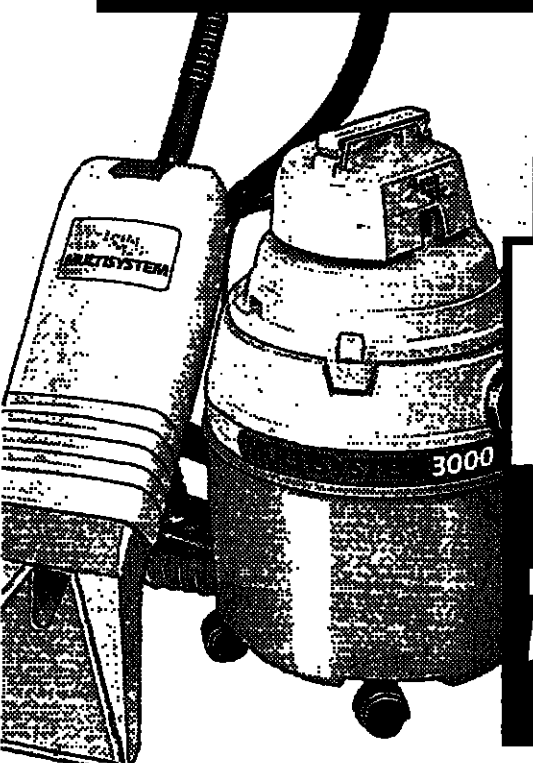


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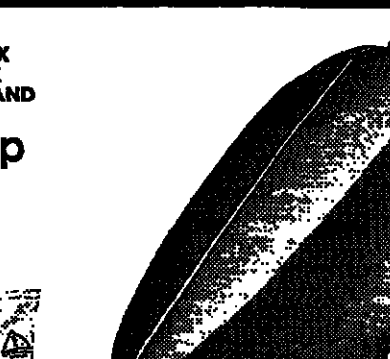
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'Father' of Israeli atom programme proposes nuclear-free Middle East

ISRAEL is ready to propose a Middle East free of non-conventional weapons and missiles as soon as a regional peace is assured, Shimon Peres, the Israeli Foreign Minister and "father" of the state's nuclear programme, said.

"We shall be the first to propose a Middle East free of nuclear weapons. We are very serious about it," he said in an interview to mark his visit to London. Though Israel does not, officially, admit that it has a nuclear capability, it is thought to have some 200 nuclear weapons.

The Israeli arms have become a stumbling block for Britain and America as they try to cajole the world's non-nuclear powers into supporting an indefinite extension

Israel does not want to entrust itself to a nuclear safeguard system as deeply flawed as the present one. Julian O'Halloran writes

of the 25-year-old Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT).

The United Nations conference on its renewal begins on April 17 in New York. Of the 172 countries that have signed the treaty, scores are arguing that it has been implemented unfairly.

Egypt, Iran and Mexico, among others, object to the fact that signatories would have to accept International Atomic Energy Agency inspections and safeguards at

their nuclear plants for an indefinite period, while a small minority led by Israel refuse to sign the treaty and have built their own nuclear arsenals.

Mr Peres was unable to be specific about the timetable. "I cannot commit myself about a year or two years, but I'm sure in your lifetime, I hope in my lifetime," he said. "I think it will happen sooner than we think." Mr Peres is 71. He played the key role in setting up

Israel's nuclear reactor at Dimona in the Negev Desert in the late 1950s and early 1960s. He also devised Israel's "studied ambiguity" over whether it had nuclear weapons, and the formula ritually repeated ever since, that Israel "will not be the first country to introduce nuclear weapons into the Middle East." "We delivered two messages," he said. "One to our friends and the other to our enemies. To our friends we said: 'We shall not introduce nuclear weapons.' And to our enemies we said, 'Keep guessing.'"

"First of all, I didn't say we have a nuclear weapons capability. But the real condition necessary is a peaceful Middle East because, for

example... you cannot say: 'I am giving up the suspected nuclear capacity of Israel.' But I can say that in order to do so, we have to have challenge inspections."

What Mr Peres seems to be suggesting is that if Israel ever did go down the road of nuclear disarmament, it would not want to entrust itself to an international nuclear safeguard system so flawed as the present one.

Israel would not be willing to dismantle its nuclear weapons, join the NPT and then allow IAEA inspectors to place all its nuclear facilities under safeguards. Israel's argument is that it has been shown to be ludicrously easy for one of its neighbours to hoodwink the IAEA.

By challenge inspections Mr Peres is referring to sudden intrusive searches. This is exactly what the IAEA failed to do in Iraq.

Instead of the IAEA, Mr Peres would prefer to send his own inspectors into neighbouring countries. But if this is dismissed by Israel's critics, what about the idea of stopping the production of plutonium as a gesture? "By and large I would favour it, but it makes me wonder if we can guarantee the real cut-off. But the idea there is a good one."

Until there has been a radical shake-up in the safeguards system, Israel has a plausible excuse for rejecting it. But if a reliable system could be achieved, Mr Peres hinted

that Israel might be willing to make its contribution. "In my life," he said, "I started with Dimona and I am winding up with Oslo. The purpose is... to deter the ones that wanted to destroy us and I feel this policy is justified, and I hope the second half will become the complete story, namely the peace story."

*Julian O'Halloran reports on the IAEA and nuclear safeguards in Aoms For War, an Assignment Special, on BBC 2 at 7.20pm on Saturday April 1. Shimon Peres's memoirs, *Battling for Peace*, are published by Weidenfeld and Nicholson at £20. They will be reviewed in The Times next week.*

Kinkel encourages Britain to play central EU role

FROM ROGER BOYES IN BONN

GERMANY yesterday urged Britain to discard its Euroscepticism, to take full part in the debate about the future of the Union and to join Paris and Bonn in an alliance at the hub of the continent.

This enthusiastic prodding came from Klaus Kinkel, Germany's Foreign Minister, after the first day of Anglo-German discussions at the annual Königswinter conference and shortly before scheduled talks with his counterpart, Douglas Hurd.

Bonn appears to have launched a concerted campaign to make sure that Mr Major does not become a captive of his Eurosceptics. In particular, Wolfgang Schäuble, the Christian Democrat parliamentary floor leader, has been trying — in a recent meeting with Mr Major, during a keynote speech to British businessmen and at a recent Oxford conference — to reassure Britain that his plan for a "hard core" Europe is not a threat to London.

The urgency of Herr Schäuble's lobbying may be prompted not so much by Germany's assessment of the power of Conservative Eurosceptics, as by the fear that the next French president will be Jacques Chirac.

Herr Schäuble has been firm in dismissing M Chirac's proposals that European decisions should be referred to national parliament. Herr Kinkel yesterday expressed clear irritation about France's reluctant attitude towards establishing Europe.

"On police matters in France there is a very strong centralist tendency," Herr Kinkel told the *Stuttgarter Zeitung*. "This touches the inner core of state sovereignty and that is why progress has become so difficult — leaving aside the various human vari-

ties involved." In his speech yesterday to a mixed British and German audience, Herr Kinkel was not so barbed about France.

There were no covert references to Charles Pasqua, the Interior Minister (who has become one of the German Government's bug-bears). Instead, he concentrated on the need to broaden the Franco-German axis.

"This is not an exclusive relationship," Herr Kinkel said. "Britain is invited to build with Germany and France an accessible, competitive and efficient Europe... we want stronger co-operation and consultation between the triangle of Germany, France and Britain."

Herr Kinkel acknowledged — as did the experts in the Anglo-German conference — that there was still substantial differences between Bonn and London, but said he would continue to press Britain to accept the principle of majority voting in formulating European foreign policy. "We

are realists and understand your reluctance when it comes to interfering in national decision-making."

"Even so, in common foreign and security policy, majority decisions should no longer be taboo. Of course, now and again the vote will go against you. But what is the alternative?"

Addressing the Euro-sceptical Conservatives — rather thinly represented at the conference — Herr Kinkel said he believed the row over Europe centred largely on linguistic misunderstandings.

"I know that some of our British friends are suspicious about deepening the Union." But federalism was not, he said, a dirty word.

"You and experts will be aware that Germans understand the word federalism to be simply the opposite of centralism."

"People are really worrying without cause. The English will stay English and the Germans German."

Herr Kinkel stressed that Britain had to play a leading part in defining Europe's defence needs during the 1996 debate. "Without Britain it would be unthinkable to shape a European foreign or defence policy." The minister said he was in favour of merging the West European Union with the European Union.

"There should be no artificial dividing lines... we should avoid having zones of different levels of security within the Union," Britain, he said, would be critical in this process.

"We will take Prime Minister Major at his word when he spoke of Britain being at the heart of Europe. A united Europe without Britain would most certainly have cardiac problems."



Kinkel: "federalism is not a dirty word"



The four glass towers, meant to resemble opened books, at the new French National Library in Paris. The project has cost £1.25 billion

Mitterrand brought to book by critics of 'TGB'

FROM CHARLES BREMNER IN PARIS

THE French National Library was officially opened by President Mitterrand yesterday in a ceremony to mark the building of the most monumental of the grand architectural projects for Paris he has championed during his 14-year term.

The library's four L-shaped glass towers on the eastern Left Bank of the Seine were the scene of the ailing President's most emotional valedictory act before stepping down in May. Two more years are needed to fill the shell, which is designed to look like four opened books. Ten million volumes have to be ferried across the Seine from the antiquated Bibliothèque Nationale and a computer system has yet to be devised before the public can use the

second biggest book repository in the world after the Library of Congress in Washington.

Built in three years at a cost of eight billion francs (£1.25 billion), the Bibliothèque Nationale de France has survived the scorn of the intellectual establishment and attempts to kill it by Jacques Chirac, the Gaullist Mayor of Paris and likely successor to M. Mitterrand. Dominique Perrault, 42, the architect, and Jean Favier, 62, the new library president, insist that the world will grow to love the enterprise that used to be satirically known as the TGB, for Très Grande Bibliothèque — a play on the name of the TGV, the high-speed train. They note the acclaim now conferred on the expanded

Louvre and its once controversial glass pyramid, which M. Mitterrand cites as the favourite of his earlier projects. Critics draw comparisons with the Bastille Opera, the whale-like music house that is usually cited as the symbol of the President's pharaonic ambitions.

Like the Opera, the library was mocked by many people as a technical and aesthetic disaster while it was still on the drawing board. Book experts ridiculed the plan to reverse the normal practice and store books in the glass towers, where they would be exposed to light and fire-risk, while keeping readers in the basement.

Big revisions, including wooden shutters and the reduction of several floors, has

answered most of the technical complaints. Some critics are even coming round to M. Perrault's choice of rectangular towers, which are now a familiar feature of the Tolbiac district, still largely a wasteland of warehouses.

The complex appears at first glance to resemble one of the blighted high-rise council estates of the 1960s. The difference has become clear as the grandeur of M. Perrault's scheme has emerged. The interior, lined with tropical woods and red carpeting, is drawing praise from all but angry ecologists, who are listing the acres of rainforest they came from. Outside the buildings is a vast sunken garden, two football fields long, studded with century-old pine trees, some 60ft tall,

brought from Normandy. Given the expense of the project, there seems little chance that a new Gaullist president can put a premature end to the library. However, at a running cost estimated at 10 per cent of the nation's large cultural budget, the four towers will serve as a constant goad to the Finance Ministry. □ London: The new British Library, next to St Pancras station, has been attacked since its inception in 1978. The National Heritage Committee called it "one of the ugliest buildings in the world" by the National Heritage Committee and it has been dubbed the "bibliographic equivalent of the M25". The cost has quadrupled to £496 million.

Leading article, page 17

THE TIMES
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Austrian welcome: The K&K Hotel Maria Theresia

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Turkish Army sweeps into Kurds' mountain fortress

FROM REUTERS IN TUNCELI, TURKEY

UP TO 15,000 Turkish troops poured into rugged Tunceli province for an offensive against Kurdish guerrillas on the same scale as the anti-rebel drive in northern Iraq, army officials said yesterday.

Turkey also went on the diplomatic offensive to back its incursion, dispatching Erdal Inonu, its new Foreign Minister, on a tour of Western capitals and turned angrily on its traditional ally, Germany.

Stung by criticism of its 11-day push into northern Iraq in pursuit of Kurdish rebels, Ankara lashed out at Bonn's decision to halt military shipments, accusing it of breaking Nato ranks.

In Tunceli convoys of military vehicles blocked roads in and around the eastern province for an expected assault on

entrenched positions of the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK). Troops, including airborne units and special forces, backed by long-range artillery, have been converging on the province from other parts of the country for the past three days. The total number of soldiers posted in Tunceli may reach more than 30,000, security officials said.

The guerrillas, who are ensconced in mountains towering to more than 10,000ft, ambushed a military convoy in Tunceli on March 18, killing 18 soldiers. The attack cast doubt on Turkish assurances that the guerrillas, fighting for a Kurdish homeland in Turkey, were all but defeated except for some bases in northern Iraq. "The ambush has made it necessary to clean

the area but it will be difficult because of the mountainous terrain," a military official said.

The rebels are believed to number up to 3,000 in Tunceli and about 2,500 in Iraq. More than 15,000 people have been killed in the PKK's decade-old separatist campaign.

The capture — dead or alive — of the guerrilla regional commander Serdin Sakik, known as "Fingerless Zeki", after losing a thumb firing a rocket in north Iraq, is one of the main objectives in the Tunceli push, soldiers said. □ Geneva: The International Committee of the Red Cross yesterday appealed to Turkey to allow it into northern Iraq to evaluate the needs of civilians and help wounded and captives. (Reuters)

Russian arsenal explodes

FROM RICHARD BEESTON IN MOSCOW

HUNDREDS of civilians were evacuated from their homes in Russia's Far East yesterday after an explosion at an ammunition depot sent missiles and ordnance flying over a 15-mile radius.

According to the Russian military the blast occurred near the Chinese border village of Taly, about 100 miles southwest of Vladivostok, when 200 railway wagons containing ammunition and missiles exploded sending projectiles over a wide area for several hours. The cause of a fire which started the explosions was not known. However there have been reports that recent explosions were set off by corrupt servicemen to cover up thefts of arms.

Rainfall pattern confirms climate fears

BY NICK NUTTALL
ENVIRONMENT CORRESPONDENT

WINTERS across northern Europe are becoming wetter, in line with supercomputer forecasts of global warming, a leading climate scientist said yesterday.

Professor Pier Vellinga of the Amsterdam Free University gave a warning that, unless emissions of so called greenhouse gases are cut further, northern Europe will experience up to a fifth more rain by 2070. At the same time, southern Europe will become increasingly drought-prone as "climatic partitioning" takes hold.

Rising rainfall, caused by warmer temperatures evaporating more water from the seas, is likely to trigger even more devastating floods than the ones witnessed in countries such as The Netherlands in the past two years. The

report is likely to increase calls from insurance firms for tougher action on emissions from power stations and other man-made pollutants.

Professor Vellinga, who is also co-chair of a working group of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change and the body that is advising nations attending this week's Berlin climate convention, said the 20th century had been marked by rising rainfall and that this had accelerated in the past three decades.

Atmospheric levels of carbon dioxide, the main gas linked with global warming, is now double that of the pre-industrial age.

Professor Vellinga cited scores of weather stations in Europe where, in the past few decades, rainfall measurements have increased "significantly". For example, in the Meuse area of Wallonia, winter precipitation has climbed more than a fifth since 1911. Flooding is also on

the rise. Professor Vellinga's report, commissioned by Greenpeace International, cited Italy as an example. Between 1950 and 1975 the country suffered 66 floods or around two a year. But between 1976 and 1993 this had risen to 126 or four floods a year. During the same period Italy has suffered seven severe droughts.

"These data seem to confirm that Italy is undergoing a climate partitioning into a wet northern region and southern semi-arid region. This splitting is in agreement with general circulation model predictions, with rainfall trends going to extremes," the report says.

Yesterday in London John Gummer, the Secretary of State for the Environment, said there was growing evidence that global warming was a genuine threat. Mr Gummer, who will join the Berlin conference next week, is calling for a 5 to 10 per cent cut in greenhouse gases by the early part of the 21st century.

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'Broken hearts still have to go to Sainsbury's'

There was no escaping Trollope this week. With her new novel *The Best of Friends* serialised on *Woman's Hour*, *The Choir* televised, *The Rector's Wife* just finished and *A Village Affair* imminent ("I do feel it is over-egging the cake," Joanna Trollope says) the annual dinner of the Trollope Society took place on Wednesday night, when devotees of Trollope A. were addressed by his kinswoman, Trollope J.

Poised like a fashion plate in her Issey Miyake gown, in the Great Hall of Lincoln's Inn, sitting between Lords Rees-Mogg and Tugendhat, Miss Trollope crisply delivered a paper on "Anthony Trollope and Sex". She praised Trollope's writing about women's feelings and their healthy sexual appetites, and raised a murmur when she said of Lily Dale, Mr Major's "ideal heroine" — "I can't share the Prime Minister's enthusiasm for her, but I am intrigued by a suggestion from Exeter University that Lily was not in fact a virgin..."

Miss Trollope ("I come from the rather sordid, commercial Westminster Trollopes — Trollope & Colls and all that. But I am the first member of the family to write since Anthony died in 1882") slightly disap-

Joanna Trollope on infidelity, dishwashers — and the trials of being pigeon-holed

proves of her forebear's being "appropriated as a regimental mascot by the Tory double-breasted and pinstriped brigade — he sent Tories up right, left and centre." Luckily John Letts, who runs the Trollope Society, has secured Robin Cook for next year's dinner, having spied Cook in a news bulletin with a Trollope under his arm.

While Trollope A. appeals to politicians of every persuasion, Trollope J. has a broader constituency and the 1990s is her decade. In the sober, reflective waning of the century she has found a readership clinging to the Thatcherite wreckage. (*The Choir* sank without trace when it came out in 1987: its time had not yet come.) "We've got over that rather grisly decade. There will always be a place for dreams beyond avarice, but

we know they don't work, in a world where even if your heart is broken or you've lost your job you still have to take the children to school and go to Sainsbury's and endure what dear old A. Trollope called those little daily lacerations of the spirit, like the journey from some awful commuter place to some ghastly office block on the fringe of the City."

Miss Trollope is much funnier than characters in her books, and funder of metropolitan gossip ("What has become, I wonder, of Alan Clark's delicious coven?" she asked).

As she zips around the bookshop circuit, people tell her they see their family lives mirrored in her novels. The crisis in her latest is infidelity — without resorting to descriptive sex, which she regards as patronising: she expects readers to surmise that some marital sex is humdrum with middle-aged fatigue, while adulterous sex hums with heedless enthusiasm — but when she says "You can mend a relationship, after infidelity, but it's like a mend in glass, you can always see the join" her audiences become hushed in recognition. "We English still believe in romantic love: so we find sexual betrayal particularly brutal. It's no



Joanna Trollope: "In the modern world there is much more justification for stoicism than for any other creed. Life cannot be all sensation."

good our pretending to be French about it.

"It's not country people I write about but the provinces, where life is still deeply provincial. In the metropolitan press, women writing for women don't seem to realise how little the benefits of equality of opportunity have filtered outside, where some women's only option out of the trap is to spend a few hours in a playgroup. I know a rector's

wife near us who is much frowned upon for being a physiotherapist."

Once docilely married to a banker, she worked in "a furtive little research department" in the Foreign Office; she skates over her own first marriage breakup with practised vagueness, except to generalise: "A marriage breakup is always a loss and a grief. It throws your world completely. My family's atti-

tude was that divorce was for other people: 'Marriage was never supposed to be a picnic, darling.'"

Joanna Trollope's domestic bliss in Gloucestershire is much chronicled. The house of honey-coloured stone, nestling in a valley with roses, wisteria, trout stream, and farmhouse kitchen where she sometimes bops to Elvis and where sits the famous Aga, gibes about which are wearing thin. ("I once sat next to Normski, Janet Street-Porter's bloke, and he told me Janet is on her second Aga. I think that gives us Aga owners a bit of tone.")

The consolation for those who turn vicious with envy is that the lease on this perfect house is nearing its end. "I want to get the move done. I'm not good at transitions, because of being so orderly." Her orderliness extends to the church — "I'm on the church cleaning rota. You should see my brasses" — and to her desk, where she can write 1,000 words an hour, but only after the dishwasher is stacked. "I despise this in myself. I would like to have an undirty car. I would like not to fuss about the dishwasher."

Miss Trollope points out that her ancestor's famous discipline of writing at 5.30am before going off to work at the Post Office was possible because he had his wife Rose to run his house, copy his manuscripts, bring up the children. Joanna has Ian Curteis, the equally devoted white-bearded playwright husband who dramatised *The Choir*. They have her two daughters in their twenties, and his two sons.

Her new novel opens with a 14-year-old fighting up a cigarette. "I do not always like

children, but I do find them interesting and I do take them seriously — I love the way, at 14, they want to break out, but insist on their parents toeing the line."

After the lesbian *Village Affair*, male couples wrote and asked her to write about them: there is a male household in her new book. "I personally don't think Fergus is gay," she says. "I think he is, as the Bishop of London put it so

she says. It took courage to want to be popular. You have to be unafraid of being treated as a popular novelist, and remember in your dark hours that Mozart and the Parthenon are both popular and of excellent quality."

"I get fed up of, as my children used to say, the middlebrow, complacent and escapist labels because I think my books are quite bleak. I don't mean to be easy reading. I mean to strike home. I don't go in for happy endings, nor for saying there is a solution to problems."

David Hare said, and I utterly go along with him, that there are some terrible blows dealt in some people's lives, that neither therapy nor socialism can cure. In the modern world there is much more justification for stoicism than for any other creed."

When asked to preach a sermon at Oriel College, Oxford, she chose to "have a little canter round the post-Freudian 20th-century notion of self-fulfilment in an irreligious world". She demolished the "grab for happiness" message that women's magazines peddle so misleadingly, making people "panicky and greedy" and prone to childish selfish behaviour. "Life cannot be all sensation, it is Monday to Friday as well."

"It is a matter of valuing the details, even the dullnesses of life, rather than the high days and holidays; it is, above all, a matter of generosity of spirit and self-discipline." After this cogent sermon she was invited to give another. "But I think I'm a one-sermon woman," she says.

THE VALERIE GROVE INTERVIEW



memorably, a grey area." Church of England vicars and bishops have now become almost too easy to send up ("the Church is nicking my patch, damnit") so instead of deans and choirboys she has this time reverted to the lay world.

For years Miss Trollope had written well-researched historical novels, to deafening silence. It was her second husband who told her "It's time you came out of the historical cupboard and went to the supermarket." Suddenly in 1991 she toppled Jeffrey Archer and enjoyed a mid-life revival. "We date life before and after *The Rector's Wife*,"

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St Desmond Pitcher, Chairman, North West Water Group, reiterated the company's commitment to strike a better balance between the interests of shareholders and customers.

"We are well aware of the responsibilities which lie upon us as our Utility Division delivers a monopoly service to its customers. As with all businesses, we must strongly meet the needs of our customers."

Equally, we are mindful of the interests of our shareholders and we have declared our intention to manage the Group with a strong emphasis upon the maximisation of shareholders' returns in the medium and long term.

The actions we have announced are compatible with both of those objectives. They are a serious attempt to position North West Water, with its monopoly utility, as socially responsible and to an extent self-regulating.

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An obscure German artist is the new owner of Eigg — but that's par for the course, says Magnus Linklater

The loopy lairds of the isles

The people of Eigg have acquired a new owner. In place of an irreverent, eccentric businessman and former bobsleigh champion, they now have a German artist who paints with fire and who has invented a new concept of architecture based on nature.

The businessman is Keith Schellenberg, who has sold the idyllic Hebridean island to 41-year-old Martin Eckhard Maruma from Stuttgart. Herr Maruma has expressed the wish to restore peace and harmony to the troubled island. He has some ground to make up.

The relationship between the islanders and Mr Schellenberg could modestly be described as strained. He has referred to them as "rotten, dangerous and totally barmy revolutionaries". They compare his imminent departure to the liberation of Haiti from the dictator Papa Doc. Whether they will take more kindly to an artist whose technique involves the use of fire as well as a paintbrush, thus enabling him "to play the dual role of the destroyer as well as the creator", remains to be seen. So far they are reserving judgment.

But Eigg is not the only island in the West to have experienced such difficulties. The whole history of Hebridean land ownership has been stained by hostility, suspicion, and occasionally bloodshed. This is partly because of the natural resentment of islanders everywhere to the intrusion of outsiders. It is partly

Laurie Murrells on Great Bernera, although some difficulties with Eigg's have forced the French-born, Oxford-educated count to put another five uninhabited islands on the market.

There is even, once again, a Macneil of Barra: the clan chief has returned to claim an inheritance which goes back centuries, though he is now a silver-haired Chicago lawyer with a Jimmy Stewart drawl.

But there are others who fall into the category of romantic or speculator or both. The ones who have philanthropic intentions as well usually come to the stickiest end, and it was with some foreboding that I noted Herr Maruma's intention to "create together a new concept for the island".

There is something in the beauty of the islands which prompts perfectly sensible people to make extravagant promises, and invest large sums of money, which are rarely appreciated as much as they think they should be, as Lord Leverhulme famously discovered in the early part of this century.

He fell in love with the island of Lewis, bought it, and then vowed to transform its economy, by investing a fortune in fish-processing and by persuading the crofters to abandon their traditional farming and go over wholesale to dairy produce. He was amazed to find that his intervention was deeply resented by the islanders.

The resulting breakdown in communication was epitomised at a mass meeting in



The departing owner of the idyllic Eigg called his islanders "rotten, dangerous and totally barmy revolutionaries"

into a conference centre, and pouring money into improving all the cottages on the island. There was a small hiccup when it was revealed that he had used Gigha as security for a loan from a Swiss bank, and then a rather larger one when his property empire collapsed, occasioning the bank in question to repossess the island. Mr Potter is no longer the Baron of Gigha.

The tiny island of Easdale, east of Mull, once a provider of slate until a great storm in the last century put paid to the business, is still, at the last reckoning, owned by Clive Feigenbaum, a former chairman of Stanley Gibbons, the stamp firm. Mr Feigenbaum dealt at the murkier end of the stamp business, with islands playing a large part in it. Back in the Seventies he set up "the Staffa postal authority" and issued a set of stamps in 23-carat gold. Since Staffa is uninhabited, there was no obvious means of using them, but collectors snapped them up and Mr Feigenbaum did very well.

Later, however, when he extended the scheme to the island of Tuvalu in the Pacific, he failed to inform the inhabitants, and was convicted of producing hundreds of thousands of stamps illegally; he was given a six-month prison sentence. There is no evidence of establishing what Mr Feigenbaum's plans for the island are. He is currently being sought by a firm of accountants and other creditors who are owed £1 million by him.

What the Hebrides really need, but rarely get, is not fancy schemes, far less golden

stamps, but consistency of ownership, and an appreciation of the fragile nature of an island economy. Unemployment is endemic, depopulation still a major issue.

Crofters, whose long struggle for recognition in the last century gained them security of tenure, do not welcome being told what to do with their land. Extravagant ideas for development tend to founder because the dream

outstrips the reality, and the reality is that small businesses based on tourism offer far better prospects of success than a lavish fish factory, a brand new distillery, or a remote conference centre.

But this is unlikely to deter those who see the islands of the West as an escape from the harsh complexity of mainland life. "Often have I thought how much men's hearts cry out for peace and quietude, and for a

return to simpler and less irritating conditions of life," wrote Alasdair Alpin MacGregor in his classic account of island life. *Behold the Hebrides*. That siren cry is as true today as it was when he wrote it, 60 years ago. Unfortunately it is a cry which appeals mostly to the wrong kind of people. There is a Gaelic saying which goes: "Islands, like women, will always turn a man's head."

Twinkling star of the late-night sky

Pre-dating Sputnik, Patrick Moore's television programme is 500 not out

TOMORROW Patrick Moore records the 500th edition of *The Sky at Night*, adorning his way through the script in the breathless, barking style that is his trademark.

First broadcast on April 24, 1957, the series, plus a few specials, has run once a month for 38 years, and Mr Moore has been in every one.

The 500th edition will be broadcast on Monday at 10pm. When Mr Moore recorded the first one, Sputnik had yet to go into orbit and the programme was a short-term "filler".

The first programmes were live. Mr Moore remembers waiting to speak and thinking: "My whole career depends on the next 20 minutes." He need not have worried. A natural who writes a script "only so the producer will know what I'm not going to say", Mr Moore was a hit. In October, Sputnik went into orbit.

"Anyone who was doing a programme on astronomy when Sputnik went up would still be doing it today," he asserts. He never records the programme more than a day or so in advance, for fear that a comet or a supernova will catch him out. Once he nearly missed a *Sky at Night*, having

cracked his head on the bath. But the BBC sent an outside broadcast team to his home at Selsey, West Sussex, and he performed. Another time, a bluebottle flew into his mouth when he was talking about the planets. "Only one thing to do," he recalls.

"Swallow it and carry on."

The programme is cheap to make, sticks to a simple presentation style, and has an audience of between 700,000 and one million. It is only part of a staggering schedule for Mr Moore, now 72. Today, he is at Jodrell Bank for a ceremony, yesterday he opened the Edinburgh Science Festival, and tomorrow he is at TV Centre.

Patrick Moore lied about his age to get into Bomber Command as a navigator, and declined a university place after the war because he did not believe in accepting a government grant. He still writes on a 1908-vintage typewriter.

Nor is he about to stop. The longest-running TV programme with the same presenter anywhere in the world, *The Sky at Night* is already commissioned for next year.

NIGEL HAWKES



Moore: 38 years on TV

Once a fly flew into his mouth during the show

He uses fire in his painting, enabling him 'to play the dual role of the destroyer as well as the creator'

Martin Eckhard Maruma

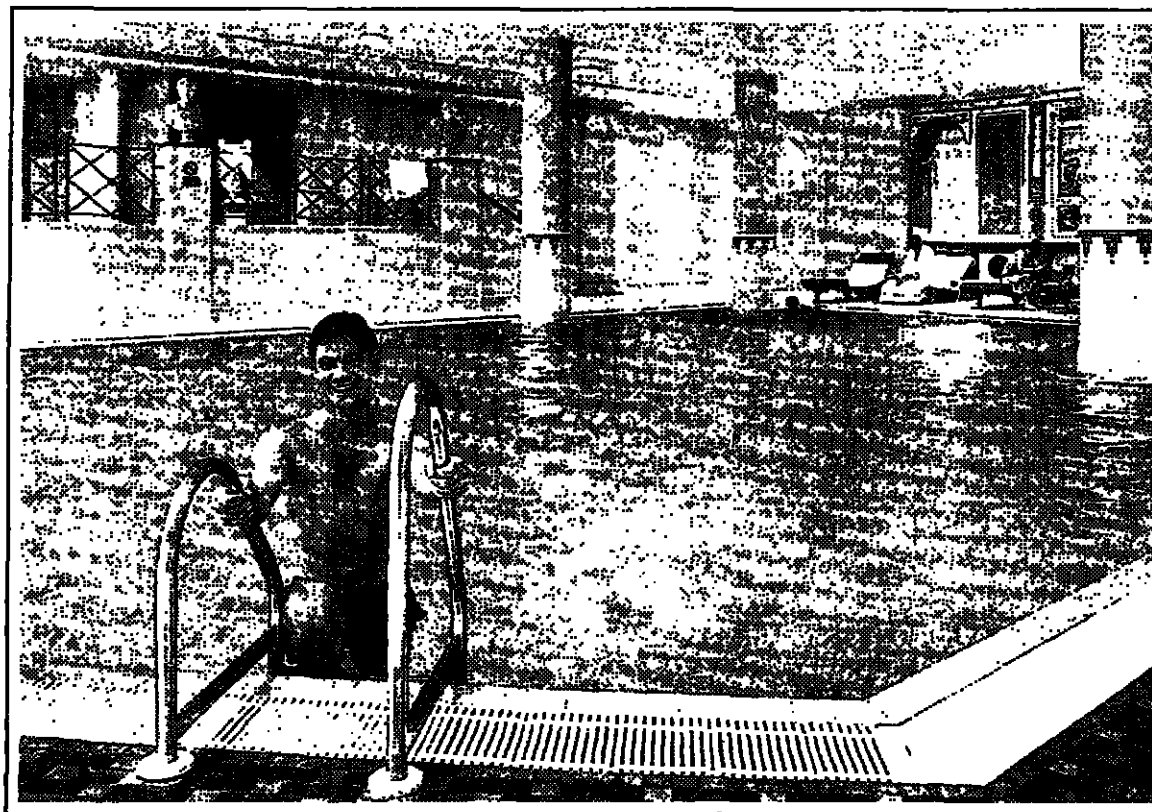


because of the Celtic character and its fierce attachment to the land. But it is undoubtedly also because of the rapid turnover of ownership and the strange new lairds which the islands tend to attract.

There are some 500 islands off the West Coast of Scotland, of which about 100 are inhabited. Some have been bought by the National Trust or conservation bodies; others, mainly the larger ones such as Skye, Mull or Lewis, have multiple ownership. There are still a few aristocratic lairds — the Earls of Granville in Ulster, Baron Strathcona on Colonsay, the Duke of Argyll in Tiree, and the Comte de la

Stornaway, where the exchanges had to be translated from the Gaelic, and where a bewildered Lord Leverhulme was told: "We are not concerned with your fancy dreams that may or may not come true. What we want is the land."

More recently, the island of Gigha, once owned by the Horlicks family of malted milk fame, acquired a new owner with equally generous instincts. The Baron of Gigha was an English property dealer, one Malcolm Potter, who announced: "I actually believe I can do some good here." He set about upgrading the airstrip, turning the main house



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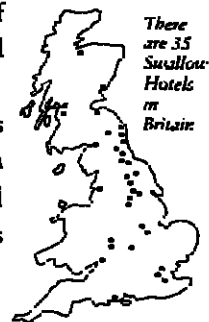
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How a pirate fantasy was shipwrecked

I take up my pen in this year of grace 19— to tell a tale as terrible as the tapping of a blind beggar's stick outside the Admiral Benbow. It begins, me hearties, with Billy Bones' high old tottering voice, rum and broken at the capstan bars, calling roughly for rum, and raving about walking the plank, and the Dry Tortugas, and wild deeds and places on the Spanish Main, among the wickedest men that God ever allowed upon the sea.

It ends with PR stunts, mobile phones, national parks authorities, Joanna Lumley and unbearable bathos. And through it all there runs the chorus: "Fifteen men on a dead man's chest. Drink and the devil had done for the rest. Yo ho ho and a bottle of rum."

Robert Louis Stevenson came across the song in a travel book of the 1830s, and used it to chilling effect in *Treasure Island*. It refers to the 18th-century pirate Edward Teach, or Blackbeard, who marooned 30 mutineers on a bleak island in the British Virgins, giving each of them a bottle of rum and a cutlass so they would kill each other. But after 30 days 15 men still stood, crazed and snubbed on the island of Dead Man's Chest.

Even castaways can't escape the rat race



LIBBY PURVES

with me". Twenty-five years later he decided to camp for a month on the island and write it up in a Sunday paper for the RLS centenary. "Only you can't maroon yourself without permission these days," he got clear-ance from the British Virgin Islands National Parks Trust, and the local Search and Rescue, who made him take survival rations and water and a portable telephone. He had a camcorder. Pusser's Rum sponsored him and provided the bottle and cutlass. The beard he grew himself, to his distaste. "It was always full of salt and very nasty."

He caught rain water and fished. The sun beat down on his shelterless beach, and he slept badly, having weird dreams, wriggling on the sharp vegetation. He re-read *Treasure Island* in the sunset and tried to think of the dying mutineers. Time passed slowly. Once, he found an ancient broken key.

and felt a brief but genuine thrill.

Romance, however, is an endangered species. Tourist boats cruised past him, pointing. A woman lawyer from New Jersey arrived wanting some wheelfish. Once, a pair of travel journalists on a freebie landed and were told he had sold his exclusive. The Princess of Wales was staying on Richard Branson's nearby Necker; who knows, she may have gawped too.

In the middle of his ordeal, he got a fax from home. The Peter Island Yacht Club sent it over by the hand of a man on a sailboard, and he read that Joanna Lumley's TV marooning stunt had just been transmitted. So at least he found out what it is like to have the Black Spot put on you.

Mr Van Marle served his month, came off feeling terrible, and flew home to find that the newspaper had lost interest in his 18,000-word diary, and merely ran a brief account in its travel pages. Now he has written a modest topographical note for *The Geographical Magazine*, mentioned the Yo ho ho, and at last got noticed. But I daresay Jim Hawkins speaks for him:

"Oxen and wain-ropes would not bring me back again to that accursed island, and the worst dreams that ever I have are when I hear the surf booming about its coasts, or start upright in bed, with the sharp voice of Captain Flint still ringing in my ears: 'Pieces of eight! Pieces of eight!'"

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man break
in rape tri



CANADIAN PRACTICES

To oppose Spain's fishermen is to support important principles

After weeks of feeble prevarication, the British Government has come belatedly to its senses in declaring that it would veto any move by the European Union to impose sanctions against Canada. Ottawa's rugged regard for conservation of fish stocks in the Grand Banks of the north Atlantic has already earned widespread plaudits for the Canadian Government. It is right that Britain should now add to its words the promise of action.

The present dispute began earlier this month when Canadian coastguards apprehended a Spanish fishing vessel in an ecologically sensitive section of the high seas adjacent to Canada's 200-mile exclusive economic zone (EEZ). Not content with inciting Brussels to adopt "counter-measures" against Ottawa — including the famous suggestion that the next summit meeting of the Group of Seven be moved from Halifax to another venue — Spain has now filed a suit against Canada in the International Court of Justice. Madrid's application to the court argues that Canada cannot extend its jurisdiction beyond its EEZ, and that its methods are contrary to international law.

Spain's action is unlikely to succeed. Canada has already — and validly — modified its acceptance of the court's jurisdiction. It has excluded disputes that arise from its conservation measures — a modification that should carry no stigma. Eleven members of the EU have already made modifications in some form, including Spain.

Since the "conservation arrest", the focus has shifted rightly to the methods employed by the Spanish ship. There is clear evidence, displayed with some panache three days ago by Brian Tobin, the Canadian Fisheries Minister, that her crew were using nets which violated the regulations of the North Atlantic Fisheries Organisation (Nafo). The meshes, measuring 115mm in the case of

outer nets and 80mm in case of inner ones, were much smaller than the 130mm limit prescribed by Nafo, of which both Canada and the EU are members.

Yet far from castigating Spain for its use of nets which devastate the ecosystem of the Grand Banks, Emma Bonino, the European Fisheries Commissioner, has fired at Canada a number of intemperate salvos. In doing so, she has underestimated both the volume of public sympathy in this country for the fishermen of Newfoundland and the strength of the Canadian case.

That case rests on a simple proposition: a country's EEZ may end at 200 miles from the coastline, but what happens in mile 201 can affect what happens in mile 199. "Straddling stock", or fish types which are found both within the EEZ and in the adjacent high seas, are now threatened with extinction on the Grand Banks. In seeking to put an end to overfishing by the Spanish fleet, Canada was only rising to the call of an emergency. There would have been no need for it to do so had Nafo been equipped with a framework for the enforcement of its own regulations, or if international law took sufficient account of the gravity of the threat to straddling stocks.

To fill the legal breach, Canada enacted the Coastal Fisheries Protection Act in 1994, extending its supervision to the proximate high seas to prevent the "destruction of these stocks and to permit their rebuilding". Other states have also taken steps: Chile declared its *mar presencial*, or "Presential Sea", in 1991, a zone beyond 200 miles in which it aims to take charge of fisheries conservation and measures against pollution. Britain's squid stocks near the Falklands could be ravaged if global conservation measures are not effected in haste. Canada is right in its crusade for conservation: it is in Britain's interests to proclaim this with vigour.

SPRINGTIME AT THE BBC

When ministers whinge and memos wing, all must be well

All governments of all complexions rub along in a state of constant tension with broadcasters. Interviewers are paid to puncture politicians' propaganda; political parties try to exploit television and radio for partisan advantage. This week has seen a classic case of intimidatory tactics from the Tories; and a typical cry of "not fair!" from the opposition parties.

Jonathan Aitken's attacks on the independence of John Humphrys earlier in the week were not worthy of either man. Any listener to Radio 4's *Today* programme can tell that Mr Humphrys interviews his guests, whatever their political views, in much the same manner. The most robust of his interviewees, Kenneth Clarke and Michael Heseltine, for example, enjoy the cut and thrust, and enhance their status by parrying with equal vigour. It was not Mr Clarke, after all, who complained about being interrupted 32 times by Mr Humphrys: indeed, during the interview, he exclaimed, "this is all great fun."

If presenters never interrupted politicians, the result would be a party political broadcast. All ministers are trained to carry on talking for as long as they can in order to evade difficult questions. They know that a *Today* slot is only a couple of minutes long and so they naturally filibuster to fill the space. Each time that a presenter cuts in and asks them to get to the point, most listeners silently applaud. The trouble with political interviews, if anything, is that politicians are allowed to get away with too much, not too little.

The greater danger is that attacks such as those this week persuade a sensitive BBC to lean too far in the opposite direction. The

opposition parties think so. A leaked memo from the deputy editor of *Panorama*, Nick Robinson, set out the arguments that executives should use for granting John Major a 40-minute interview in the run-up to the local elections. Aware that the other parties would demand equal airtime, Mr Robinson's memo frankly discussed stratagems to ensure that their respective leaders would not all have to be given a right of reply.

Mr Major's advisers have decided — for good or ill — that the Prime Minister needs a media blitz to restore his standing. Hence his recent interview with *The Daily Telegraph*, his appearance this morning on *Good Morning with Anne and Nick*, next Monday's *Panorama* programme, and a couple of set-piece speeches within a week. *Panorama*, like most political programmes, has a standing invitation to interview the Prime Minister. That he should decide to accept at a time that suits him is hardly surprising.

Nor is it surprising that the opposition parties should complain. But their points are purely and legitimately party political. They try to manipulate the broadcasters just as cynically as do the Tories. Interviews with Tony Blair are granted for maximum impact; the spin doctors would not be doing their job if they did not choose their slots with care.

The job of the BBC, though, is to remain clearly unimpaired by these complaints. In the months before the corporation's licence was renewed, there was perhaps some pragmatic justification for nervousness. Now the organisation can afford to be more robust.

TRES GRAND APPETIT

How to order bookshelves the French way

France's new national library, the most grandiose of many public monuments to President Mitterrand's monarchic reign, was inaugurated yesterday in one of the President's last public acts before he leaves office. Mitterrand has spared neither effort nor expense to ensure that the construction of the library was completed — even if it will be two years before it is filled with books, or readers — before his successor could alter or delay the project.

The result is an unabashed *folie de grandeur*, scornfully dubbed the "trés grande bibliothèque" by Parisians in mocking allusion to France's high-speed *Train à Grande Vitesse*. Four separate giant towers, L-shaped with the intention of suggesting upright open books, have been furnished with specially patented carpets, rare woods, reading rooms the size of football pitches and an auditorium resting on huge steel coils to absorb vibrations from the Left Bank's rush-hour.

The *trés grande bibliothèque* has exhibited a *trés grand* appetite for public funds, costing over a billion pounds to build, and with operating costs that will gobble up a tenth of the Government's cultural budget. Wooden panels had to be hastily added to the facades of the buildings after engineers and scholars pointed out that the light and heat absorbed by the glass and steel towers structures would damage the books.

At a cost of £4.4 million, more than 100 fully grown trees were transplanted into the library's private forest — an extravagance which recalls the arboreal alleys that Louis

XIV had planted for Versailles. Alas, readers may but dream of casting down their tomes and taking a refreshing stroll among the greenery with an agreeable fellow-user who catches their eye. Unlike Versailles, this scenic plot is meant only to be looked at, not walked in.

So much then, for those who claimed that the sundry difficulties besetting the construction of the new British Library at St Pancras could happen only here, where we are more more stung by our public projects than the French. The British version shares many of the *bibliothèque*'s problems. Both have aroused architectural controversy and charges of gigantism. The central difference is that in Paris, no less an individual than the President has overseen the building's completion, whereas our new library has been shunted from pillar to post between government departments and heritage organisations, without any senior politician taking responsibility for its furtherance.

Fifty years ago, long before the cyberworld staked its claim, Jorge Luis Borges, the Argentine writer and sometime librarian, predicted that "the library will endure: illuminated, solitary, infinite, perfectly motionless, equipped with precious volumes, useless, incorruptible, secret". Mitterrand's rush to finish the building during his administration may be vainglorious, but it demonstrates a robust will to preserve the character of a national library, despite the difficulties inherent in the undertaking — or perhaps because of them.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

1 Pennington Street, London E1 9XN Telephone 0171-782 5000

Defence attachés 'value for money'

From Sir Michael Wilford

Sir, Contrary to your Whitehall Correspondent's reference to Japan as a country where Britain does not sell arms ("Attaches dig in as budgets for entertainment come under fire", report, March 27), Britain provided all the 75mm gun barrels and much of the ammunition used in postwar Japanese tanks, thanks to the hard work of generations of our military attachés. In addition, we have sold them Rapier (anti-aircraft defence), mortar location equipment, 81mm mortars and the 155mm FH70 howitzer.

Rolls-Royce, with the assistance of successive air attachés, has always had some success in the military aero-engine market; but perhaps most remarkable of all has been the work of our naval attachés in seeking to convince the Japanese Naval Self Defence Force that our Rolls-Royce gas turbines were the world's finest propulsion units for warships.

They succeeded and today, instead of American units, practically all modern Japanese warships house British-designed engines built under licence by Kawasaki Heavy Industries. It cannot be pure coincidence that two out of my three excellent naval attachés became admirals.

May I seek also to put in perspective the spending on entertainment in one year (£30,000) by the defence attachés. Japan is a very expensive country to live in, and in my day any major foreign company giving its annual cocktail buffet reception for 300 or so guests in a big Tokyo hotel would have spent about £17,000 (£50,000 at today's exchange rate).

While not all entertaining can be done in the embassy, the fact that we have a gracious and delightful residence does mean that we can entertain far more cheaply, and, I believe, effectively.

Yours sincerely,
MICHAEL WILFORD
(HM Ambassador to Japan, 1975-1980),
Brook Cottage,
Abbots Ann, Andover, Hampshire.
March 28.

From Brigadier J. F. Rickett

Sir, Having recently retired from the Army after being the military attaché in Paris, I will try to quantify the job. A good attaché should be able to gain the confidence of authoritative people in and around his accredited country's armed forces. In this way he can hope to influence events, obtain important information and, by making more contacts, generally to create a feeling of goodwill towards his own country.

He must obviously entertain, which is cheaper and more informal at home and which I found more effective; indeed only in this way is the value of the friendship enhanced. If an attaché does his job competently he will invariably overspend his allocated allowance. I willingly spent some £10,000 out of my salary during my 3½-year term (1991-94) on entertainment.

Yours faithfully,
JOHNNY RICKETT
(Comptroller),
The Union Jack Club,
Sandell Street, Waterloo, SE1.
March 28.

From Major-General J. D. Lunt

Sir, During my 2½ years as defence attaché/adviser at the British High Commission in New Delhi (1966-69) I must have expended around £2,000 in official entertainment in order to get to know senior officers of the Indian Armed Services and other people of influence.

Among other by-products I managed to persuade the Indian Army to buy the Abbot self-propelled gun at a cost of around £10 million. Not a bad return on our money?

Yours sincerely,
JAMES LUNT,
Hilltop House,
Little Milton, Oxfordshire.
March 27.

Homosexual priests

From Mr Alasdair Paine

Sir, Now that the Reverend Christopher Wardale has openly and unrepentantly admitted a continuing homosexual relationship with the man he lives with in his vicarage in Darlington (Libby Purves, March 23) he has presented his diocesan bishop with an apparently unavoidable decision.

On the one hand, the bishop could remove Mr Wardale's licence, and in so doing would have the support of Scripture, tradition, the vows he took when he was himself ordained priest, and the 1987 verdict of General Synod. Such action would take courage and strength, but is neither impossible nor without precedent.

On the other, he could leave Mr Wardale in place. This is the easier option in the short term, but the unavoidable conclusion would be that the bishop regarded such a lifestyle as acceptable in a minister of Christ. It is not, and inaction in my view could only lead to further damaging alienation of churchgoers who fear episcopal drift in this area.

Yours faithfully,
ALASDAIR PAINE,
Wycliffe Hall, Oxford.
March 24.

Police powers and loss of suspects' right to silence

From Mr Roger Leng

Sir, The Commissioner of the Metropolitan Police (letter, March 24) implies that his officers are frustrated by the inadequacy of the criminal justice system to protect victims. Whatever the perceptions of his officers, it should not be accepted that any deficiencies in the criminal justice system result from inadequacy in police powers. The police already have powers to stop, search and arrest citizens whom they reasonably suspect.

Once arrested the citizen's home can be searched, saliva taken from his mouth and hair from his head, he can be compulsorily questioned and detained for that purpose for up to 24 hours for minor offences and 96 hours for serious offences. In each case the citizen is under a corresponding duty to submit and may be charged with obstruction if he resists.

After April 9, the police will have a new power, to threaten a suspect that if he declines to speak his silence may be treated as evidence against him. I suggest that any further measures to ease the processes of investigation and prosecution would not be tolerable in a democratic society.

Yours faithfully,
ROGER LENG,
University of Warwick,
School of Law,
Coventry CV4 7AL.
March 24.

From Mr Ian S. O. Williams

Sir, I suggest that Chief Constable Pollard (letter, March 24) has missed a fundamental factor. Surely it is the responsibility of the police to investigate criminal behaviour. When the police are satisfied that they have caught the perpetrators and have sufficient evidence to prove it beyond reasonable doubt then, and not until then, they will bring charges against those they believe to be guilty.

After charges are brought the persons charged are entitled to seek legal advice. It then becomes the responsibility of the defence lawyers to test the prosecution case. It is not, and never

has been, the responsibility of defence lawyers to prove truth.

If the rules on the manner in which criminal behaviour is to be tested in court need amendment, that surely is a matter for Parliament, not the Law Society.

Yours faithfully,
IAN S. O. WILLIAMS,
Holcome, Langley,
Stratford upon Avon, Warwickshire.
March 24.

From Mr Anthony Edwards

Sir, Chief Constable Pollard and others should not complain. The role of defence lawyer is precisely recognised by Parliament in codes of practice coming into force on April 10.

The Solicitor's only role in the Police Station is to protect and advance the legal rights of his client. On occasions this may require the Solicitor to give advice which has the effect of his client avoiding giving evidence which strengthens a prosecution case (Code C, note 6D).

This is not always easy or pleasant for the solicitor. It is, however, inevitable in an adversarial system. It is also essential in a free society.

Yours faithfully,
ANTHONY EDWARDS
(President),
The London Criminal Courts
Solicitors' Association,
Park House, 29 Mile End Road, E1.
March 27.

From Mr Steve Billington

Sir, I am amazed by the response to Roger Ede's article, "Why shouldn't a client say silent?" (March 21), on the Law Society's approach to the right to silence. Mencap has been advising people with learning disabilities about the right to silence for many years, and we are gravely concerned about the potential implications that the new restrictions have for the vulnerable people we represent.

Many of the proven cases of miscarriages of justice have been shown to involve vulnerable people who admitted to a crime out of fear, misunderstood the gravity of the situation,

or simply did not understand the questions they were being asked.

The Police and Criminal Evidence Act 1984 introduced the "appropriate adult" scheme, which entitles all "mentally disordered" suspects to the assistance of an adult (typically a social worker, probation officer or relative), who will support them during police questioning.

Our recent research, "Out of Depth and out of sight", showed that one in five suspects is likely to be mentally vulnerable, but that only one in 500 sees an appropriate adult. There can be few stronger arguments for preserving what is left of the right to silence.

Yours faithfully,
STEVE BILLINGTON
(Director of Campaigns),
Mencap,
123 Golden Lane, EC1.
March 24.

From the President of the Law Society

Sir, The Law Society's understanding of the solicitor's duty to the suspect in the police station is confirmed by the new Home Office code of practice. The society's guidelines do not "construct an excuse" for a suspect's silence, as Mr Pollard put it. The court will still be able to draw an adverse inference from that silence.

This is a complex new law; the guidelines aim to ensure that the suspect is advised in his or her best interests. In many cases it will be in the suspect's best interests to co-operate in answering police questions.

Advising suspects in police stations is an important part of the checks and balances in the criminal justice system. The defence solicitor's role may be different from that of the police (as both the Government and the Royal Commission on Criminal Justice appear to have recognised) but that does not make it any less valuable.

Yours faithfully,
CHARLES ELLY,
President,
The Law Society,
113 Chancery Lane, WC2.

'Mendi' memorial

From Dr Donald Lowry

Sir, It is indeed disgraceful that the sacrifice of 607 black South Africans who went down with the troopship *SS Mendi* in 1917 should have had to wait for over 70 years and the occasion of a royal visit for the erection in their native country of a monument to their bravery ("Queen honours black war dead", March 24).

Your correspondent claims that "the dead have not previously been honoured in their own country". General Louis Botha, then prime minister of the Union of South Africa, was so deeply moved by accounts of the victims' valour that he led a minute's silence in the Union parliament, the only occasion, as far as I know, on which white South African MPs stood in solemn tribute to the courage of their black compatriots.

Yours faithfully,
DONALD LOWRY,
606 Manor Road,
Cogges, Witney, Oxfordshire.
March 24.

From Mr Bruce Knoefel

Sir, The South African High Commission, formerly an embassy, has a tradition of honouring the dead of the *Mendi* each year. In my tour of duty here we have officiated at the Commonwealth War Graves Commission's cemetery at Hollybrook, Southampton, where they are recorded, on each Remembrance Sunday, even in the years of South Africa's absence from the Cenotaph in Whitehall. The South Africa Navy also holds an annual commemoration in Attercliffe, near Pretoria.

The *Mendi* roll at Hollybrook is not exclusively "black"; the "whites" of the battalion are listed integrally with their "black" comrades.

Sincerely,
BRUCE KNOEFEL
(Counsellor),
South African High Commission,
Trafalgar Square, WC2.
March 27.

Words perfect

From Mr Michael R. Stannard

Sir, My candidate for the parliamentary draftsmanship award (letters, March 20, 24, 28) is section 832 (1) of the Income and Corporation Taxes Act 1988: "interest" means both annual yearly interest and interest other than annual or yearly interest."

I have the honour to remain, Sir, your obedient servant,
MICHAEL STANNARD,
PO Box 293, Jersey JE4 9TY, CI.

Matter of taste

From Mrs Gentian Walls

Sir, How I agree with Libby Purves's pertinent views on "Mad Faddist Disease" (March 24). Has she ever noticed that however hard one works to give vegetarian friends a suitable meal, they rarely extend the same courtesy in return by giving us a decent piece of meat to get our teeth into?

Yours faithfully,
GENTIAN WALLS,
Merricks, Upper Easbourne,
Midhurst, West Sussex.

Letters should carry a daytime telephone number. They may be faxed to 0171-782 5046.

ules on adside ns to be elaxed

Department of Transport announced yesterday intended to widen the definition of businesses to include businesses on local roads. John Roads, said "all reasonable requests for signs will be met".

present tourist attraction apply to erect a sign if they attract a certain number of visitors and have approved by a regional board.

however, the Automobile Association said too many would distract drivers and cause accidents. Country campaigners expressed concern at the prospect of spoiling lanes and

mer MP dies

Charles Irving, the former MP for Cheltenham, died yesterday after a long illness. The 71-year-old was a founder of the Cheltenham Aids Trust and died of cancer six weeks after the death of his wife, a GP and one of the country's leading political activists on charges of supplying

rov top of bill

Krus Opera is expected to be the star attraction of the Edinburgh International Festival. All 25 members travelling to Scotland to perform three operas, including a concert performance of the Russian and Latvian operas, the festival is expected to be a success. The festival runs from August 13 to September 2.

op murder

A 40-year-old man was beaten to death in the small shop in the town of Coleraine. The victim was a local resident and was found dead in the shop. The police are investigating the case and have not yet arrested anyone.

us deaths fine

A driver of a double-decker bus was fined £100 for driving on a road which was closed to traffic. The driver was fined for driving on a road which was closed to traffic. The driver was fined for driving on a road which was closed to traffic.

ail forecast

A number of prisoners are expected to be released from prison in the next few days. The prisoners are expected to be released from prison in the next few days. The prisoners are expected to be released from prison in the next few days.

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OBITUARIES

TONY LOCK



Tony Lock, former England and Surrey spin bowler, died of cancer in Perth, Western Australia, yesterday aged 65. He was born on July 5, 1929.

WITH the late Jim Laker, Tony Lock was one of Surrey and England's "spin twins" who helped their county to seven successive championships in the years 1951-58 and featured in some of England's notable performances of the period. Cricket was Lock's life. At the age of six he was photographed, fully outfitted for the game, wearing pads and carrying a bat much too large for him. By then the game had him enthralled.

Right through the years until he died of cancer, cricket remained an integral part of his life. Nobody pursued a passion with more fervour or more whole-hearted endeavour. Nobody could have fought harder to overcome the obstacle which was put in his way when his bowling action came under suspicion at a critical time in his career.

To his natural ability to catch, bowl and hit a cricket ball were allied an instinctive aggression and an urge to get the job done by the shortest possible route. He was, as Len Hutton once said, a slow bowler with all the instincts of a fast bowler, and throughout the whole of a career in first-class cricket, which began with Surrey in 1946 and finished in Western Australia in 1971, these qualities were evident.

Born in Lymington, close to the northeast boundary of Surrey with Kent, Graham Richard Anthony Lock spent his early days watching and playing cricket on the village green. At 14 he captained the Lymington Church of England School, bowling fast and hitting the ball as hard as he could — he once hit the first three balls of an innings for six.

Wiser counsels prevailed, however, and by the time he had come to the attention of Surrey, a process in which the Surrey alumnus, Sir Henry Leveson Gower took a hand, Lock was a slightly slow left-arm bowler and a forceful right-handed batsman. He signed professional forms for Surrey at the age of 17, but it was not until 1949, when he returned following a spell of National Service, that he established himself in Surrey's senior side.

In his early days he was noted more for his control of length and direction than for the vicious spin for which he later became renowned. This developed through his association with Jim

Laker on the Surrey staff, through practice and, especially, through bowling during two successive winters in the nets at the Croydon indoor school. Yet the very means by which he became a bowler to be feared was also the cause of a kink in his action which was later to become the bane of his life.

It is widely believed that a beam at the bowler's end in those nets at Croydon caused him to forego the high, straight arm for which he had been noted. The result was an action which brought suspicion as to its fairness, especially when he produced his faster ball, a delivery of fearsome pace, delivered off the same slow-bowler's run. A week after making his successful debut for England against India at Old Trafford in 1952, Lock was no-balled for throwing against the same opponents at the Oval.

By now arguably the most dangerous attacking slow left-arm bowler in the world, part of the Laker-Lock axis which swept Surrey on their helpful Oval wicket to victory after victory in the County Championship, Lock continued to bowl for Surrey and England under a cloud of suspicion. Both at home and abroad umpires were on the lookout for him and batsmen were often righteously indignant about "Lockie's" faster ball.

So much was this the case that in 1954, during a match between Surrey and Essex at the Oval, the Essex captain, having resisted valiantly for a time in fading light, turned to survey his three stumpings lying flat on the ground, the result of a faster delivery. "How was I out, then, run out?" He inquired pointedly of the square leg umpire.

But Lock went on bowling in much the same style and Surrey and England went on selecting him, despite his being no-balled during the 1954 tour of the West Indies. The MCC Australian tour of 1958-59, and a film made during the New Zealand leg of that tour, made him decide to put an end to the controversy over his action. His decision to iron out the fault ushered in a new phase of his career.

By then Laker and Lock were as well established as Fortnum and Mason. Lock had taken the bulk of his 174 Test match wickets and most of the 2,844 wickets eventually garnered during his first-class career. He had once, in 1956, taken 16 wickets in a match against Kent including an analysis of 10-54.

Surprisingly omitted from the MCC tour of Australia in 1962-63, he played for Western Australia that season and, after returning to play for Surrey in 1963, he emigrated to Perth where, first as player-coach, then as captain of Western Australia, he began perhaps the most rewarding phase of his playing life.

For he was also called upon to captain Leicestershire during the Australian winters and in the evening of his career succeeded not only in elevating Leicestershire well above the Cinderella status that had dogged the county for so long, but in leading Western Australia to victory in the Sheffield Shield.

It was now that his boundless enthusiasm for the game was seen at its best. Lock never knew the meaning of the word surrender. He was quick to praise the efforts of those under him and was almost too effusive in his reactions to a successful play in the field, often embracing the recipient of his freely distributed congratulations. So much so, that legend has it that Leicestershire's best slip fielder once owned up to failing to take a straightforward catch. "Because I couldn't stand the thought of being kissed by Lockie at 11.32 in the morning."

Lock was one of the great backward short-leg fielders, taking more than 800 catches off slow and fast bowling alike. He was also a far better batsman than his figures indicated.

The victim of protracted legal action in Australia towards the end of his life, when he was cleared of child abuse charges, Lock bore the ordeal stoically as he had served Surrey, England and his adopted state.

His wife Audrey died last year. Two sons and an adopted daughter survive him.

RONALD McNAIR SCOTT



Ronald McNair Scott, soldier, biographer and novelist, died on March 21 aged 88. He was born on May 29, 1906.

MUCH in the tradition of Siegfried Sassoon, Ronald McNair Scott combined lives as a soldier, a poet and a fox-hunting man. In his last decade, after fifty years of devoting himself almost exclusively to the affairs of Hampshire, he suddenly resumed his writing career with two acclaimed biographies of Robert the Bruce and Alfred the Great.

Ronald Guthrie McNair Scott had mixed Highland and Lowland ancestry. His family settled in Malaysia in the 18th century, and his grandfather built Government House and St Andrew's Cathedral in Singapore. His father, who was born in Singapore, was

chairman of Guthrie's, a rubber-planting and trading company. He retired to England and brought up his son in Surrey.

McNair Scott's first published poem appeared in *Public School Verse* for 1923-24, when he was at Cheltenham (John Bejeman was another contributor). At Oxford, where he read English, he was awarded the Casbard scholarship at St John's College. He contributed to *Oxford Poetry* for each of the three years he was there, appearing with W. H. Auden (the editor for 1926 and 1927), Cecil Day-Lewis and Louis MacNeice.

After leaving Oxford he worked, in the late 1920s, at the *London Mercury* with Sir John Squire, and from 1930 to 1934 as a literary critic for *The Sunday Times*. At the same time he began writing his first two novels, both published in

Territorials in 1938 and served in the Border Regiment during the war, attaining the rank of major. In Belgium in 1940 his battalion was surrounded near Tournai. Seizing a stray horse, he disappeared for 24 hours to reconnoitre and managed to find a way through the German lines. The regiment subsequently retreated through this, in single file and at dead of night, a piece of initiative for which McNair Scott was mentioned in dispatches.

From 1941 to 1944 he served with the Air Support Controls in the Middle East and took part in mounting the "shadow operation" intended to convince the Germans that the Allies were about to invade Turkey. Throughout the war he carried with him a London Library copy of *The Principles of Arable Farming* and, thus

prepared, he settled down afterwards to farm near Basingstoke in Hampshire. He entered into local life as a county councillor, JP and chairman of the juvenile bench. He also hunted regularly and for nine years was joint master of the Vine and Craven Hunt.

It was only when he retired from these activities that he took up writing again and, in 1952, published a biography of Robert the Bruce from whom, like so many Scotsmen, he claimed descent. Written with an infectious gusto and a soldier's eye for tactics and terrain, it is the most readable of modern biographies of the Scottish king.

Alfred the Great, his last book, published in 1993, shared the same qualities of zest and clarity. A reviewer in *The Spectator* noted: "Ronald McNair Scott... devotes only one sentence of his elegant, thoroughly researched history to the story of the canals. But it is an important case. Scott makes it clear that King Alfred did not burn any cakes; he merely allowed cakes to burn. He neglected cake-baking as they overcooked not because he was absent-minded or irresponsible but because he wasn't. He was concentrating on keeping his weaponry fit to expel Vikings invaders from his kingdom of Wessex."

McNair Scott came to London about once a week and enjoyed visiting the London Library and Brooks's. But he was essentially a countryman. He married in 1930 Mary Berry, a neighbour in Surrey and the eldest daughter of the 1st Viscount Camrose. She survives him, together with three daughters and two sons.

SIR CHARLES IRVING



Sir Charles Irving, Conservative MP for Cheltenham, 1974-82, and former chairman of the House of Commons Catering Committee, died yesterday aged 71. He was born on May 4, 1923.

AS AN MP, Charles Irving was famous for turning the loss-making Commons catering services into profit. Unluckily for him, this achievement tended to overshadow his other work at Westminster. In fact, he was a hard-working politician prepared to put his conscience before the party line, an active penal reformer, a brave and early crusader for the victims of AIDS and the leading rebel against Margaret Thatcher's ban on union rights at the Government Communications Headquarters (GCHQ) in his own constituency.

Irving's first political memory was of being taken by his mother, an actress and former suffragette, to an anti-capital punishment demonstration held to protest against a planned execution at Gloucester Prison. He was rescued from a police baton charge by the millionaire Violet van der Elst, then a leading figure in the anti-hanging movement, who pulled him into her Rolls-Royce. Although this particular condemned prisoner was reprieved, the idea of hanging so appalled the young Irving that, once in the House of Commons, he voted against capital punishment on every occasion on which the issue came up.

His life was rooted in Cheltenham where he was born in the Irving Hotel, then owned by his father. He was educated first at schools in Cheltenham and then as a boarder at Lucton School in Herefordshire. His school days were uniformly unhappy and he was only too pleased to start training to take over the family business at the Irving Hotel. He was due to join the Army when unexpectedly he failed to pass his medical. His potential military career suffered another setback during a Home Guard exercise in the Leckhampton Hills when a slip caused him to plunge his bayonet into the rear of another volunteer who unfortunately happened to be a retired lieutenant-general.

His interest in politics was stimulated by the war but it was not until 1948 that he fought his first election — and

then it was as an independent. He was elected to Cheltenham Borough Council in a strongly Labour ward and later that year he won a seat on Gloucestershire County Council, where he served for more than 30 years. He was Mayor of Cheltenham in 1958, 1959 and again in 1971.

It became obvious that he had exhausted the possibilities in local government and he began to think of Westminster. He fought the general elections of 1970 and February 1974 in seats where there was little realistic chance of a Conservative victory but the summer of 1974 brought his big chance when Sir Douglas Dodds-Parker, the sitting Member for Cheltenham, announced his retirement. Irving's local reputation made him the obvious successor and, while Harold Wilson turned his minority into a majority Government in the election of that autumn, Cheltenham stayed resolutely Tory. Irving subsequently beat off sustained Liberal attacks on his seat and it was not until he left the Commons that he fell to a Liberal Democrat. He was knighted in 1990.

Though Margaret Thatcher led the Conservative Party for almost all of Irving's parliamentary career, she would never have described him as "one of us". He was, it is true, a convinced Euro-sceptic but on most other issues he lined up with the party "wets". This was demonstrated most visibly over the ban on union membership at GCHQ. He began by attacking the use of lie detectors — he was critical of their efficiency long before the GCHQ affair — and when the ban was debated he led the rebellion. He described the whole matter as an "appalling bungle" and claimed it showed "incompetence and insensitivity" on the part of the Government. With a handful

of others he pointedly abstained when it came to the vote.

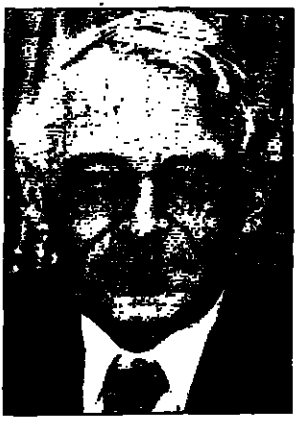
As a backbencher he opposed cutting the benefits of homeless teenagers and pleaded for more funds for the social services, even if this meant higher taxes for smokers and drinkers. He also demanded free optical and dental examinations. Prison conditions and the spread of AIDS, however, were his main preoccupations. He urged the introduction of weekend prison sentences and deplored the sending of mentally ill people to prisons instead of to special hospitals. He backed a proposed strike of probation officers and attacked the Home Office for retaining imprisonment for the outdated crime of "sleeping rough". His dire warnings of likely explosions in some prisons because of overcrowding were dramatically vindicated.

Disturbed at the spread of AIDS in prisons, he proposed the official issue of condoms. He also wanted clean syringes to be distributed free to help stop the spread of the disease. He was proved wrong, however, in his 1989 warning of "an imminent holocaust" because of AIDS, and he failed in his plea for a ministry dedicated to fighting the disease.

As an obviously concerned politician he was sometimes irritated that he generated most publicity through his period as chairman of the Commons Catering Committee. There was no denying, though, that he flourished in the post. He introduced new or improved lines into the Commons shops — including Commons humbugs, which produced the inevitable gibes and insisted on Commons menus being in English. In a comparable move, he overruled a previous decision to buy German china and made it mandatory for only British china to be used in the restaurants. Another innovation was a harpist playing in the Harcourt Room, now the Churchill Room, when MPs entertained their guests in the evenings. He was also responsible for replacing French mineral waters with British — one of his few common causes with Margaret Thatcher.

Irving, who always described himself as "a shy bachelor", never married, though he had a deep and Platonic friendship with Dame Janet Fookes which was a feature of parliamentary life for many years.

IAN EDWARDS-JONES



Ian Edwards-Jones, QC, the first banking ombudsman, died on March 3 aged 71. He was born in Swansea on April 17, 1923.

IAN EDWARDS-JONES was a man of several parts but above all of passionate independence of mind. This made him not the easiest person to pioneer the notion of an ombudsman for bank customers but to him belonged the credit for turning an idea into a reality. He was himself a man of total integrity and felt, although he rarely expressed it, nothing but disdain for those who advanced some line or view based on their own self-interest.

The son of a solicitor in practice in Swansea, Edwards-Jones was sent to school at Rugby, from where during the war he went straight into the Army. He was commissioned in the 2nd Field Regiment, Royal Artillery, and served in North Africa and at the Anzio landings, where he was wounded in the head. He continued to serve in Italy and in Palestine, where the regiment was moved in early 1945. On demobilisation he went up to Trinity College, Cambridge, reading law and gaining a BA. He then read for the Bar. He was called by the

Middle Temple in 1948. He was a pupil of J. H. Stamp and was kept on in his chambers at the end of his pupillage. He joined Lincoln's Inn and practised in 1950.

His practice was of general Chancery work. He was a quick but accurate draftsman and an early producer of pensions schemes. He took silk in 1967 and had a substantial practice as a leader. In 1975 he was elected a Bencher of Lincoln's Inn, to which he gave devoted service. In 1979 he took an appointment as a National Insurance Commissioner. The job involved careful consideration of extremely complicated wording of statutory instruments which were (and are) by no means always consistent.

After six years and the conversion to Social Security Commissioner, he was invited to set up the office of the banking ombudsman. This was the first of the "private" ombudsmen and the task involved the creation of appropriate systems, the setting-up of an office, with staff who understood their tasks and with equipment to get the complaints dealt with properly. The costs of establishing the system were heavy and the sponsoring banks had hoped and much effort had to be spent in convincing the council of the good sense of Edwards-Jones's proposals. After three years, with the scheme up and running, he resigned.

Thereafter he devoted himself to his family, to his fishing, and to his interest in tree planting, photography, and viticulture on the banks of the Wye. Edwards-Jones was a member of the Wye Salmon Fisheries River Association and chairman from 1980 to 1993, a member of Welsh Water's (later the National Rivers Authority's) regional fisheries advisory committee, and was constantly active in promoting the care and conservation of salmon and the Wye. He is survived by his wife Sue, whom he married in 1950, and by their three sons.

PERSONAL COLUMN

FLIGHTS DIRECTORY

FLIGHTS

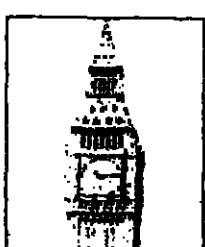
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THE TIMES

BUSINESS EDITOR Lindsay Cook

FRIDAY MARCH 31 1995

FK

Shares rise as Bundesbank surprises markets with rate cuts

Germans hand dollar a lifeline

BY JANET BUSH
ECONOMICS CORRESPONDENT

THE Bundesbank yesterday surprised the markets and held out a lifeline to the dollar and to those European currencies that have been struggling by cutting two of its key interest rates.

The dollar gained more than three pence against the German mark and sterling jumped more than five pence before settling for a gain at the close of three pence. The Spanish peseta and the Italian lira, which have hit successive record lows against a resurgent mark, soared.

Stock markets around Europe

also bounced on the news. In London, the FT-SE 100 index closed 33.9 points higher, at 3,176.2, and the price of government bonds was sharply higher. However, the reaction on Wall Street was muted, on a view that the dollar's problems are too fundamental to be solved by a single interest rate cut in Germany.

The German central bank has a reputation for wrong-footing financial markets, and yesterday was no exception.

It cut the discount rate by half a point, to 4 per cent, and its short-term repo rate, a key money market rate, by 35 basis points, to 4.5 per cent. In addition, it left the way open for a downward drift in money

market interest rates by saying that the repo rate would be fixed at its new level for only a week, after which it would be variable.

The discount rate, which marks the floor of German interest rates, has been unchanged since May of last year, and the repo rate has been held at 4.85 per cent since July of last year.

Bundesbank council members, including Hans Tietmeyer, its president, had dangled the possibility of an interest rate cut in front of the markets in various public comments recently, but it was widely assumed that this was merely a costless ploy to restore some stability to the foreign exchanges.

Council members, under pressure

to loosen policy as the dollar and several European currencies hit record lows against the mark, repeatedly said, at the same time, that they would not compromise German domestic policy because of others' troubles.

Lingering speculation of a rate cut had faded after the US Federal Reserve decided, earlier this week, not to raise its own rates in defence of the dollar.

In an unusually long statement yesterday, the Bundesbank went out of its way to emphasise domestic reasons for its move. It said that the decision took account of persistently weak money supply growth as well as "changes in the monetary environment". The latter is central bank code for the extraordinary strength of the mark recently.

The statement is laced with references to the strong mark, but the central bank took care to explain its significance in terms of domestic, rather than international, policy. It said that the strong mark "should form a considerable counterweight to the upward pressure on domestic costs".

Clearly conscious that yesterday's move would be interpreted as an attempt to rescue the dollar that might compromise its own fight against inflation, the Bundesbank emphasised its determination to secure price stability. The central

bank said: "The interest rate cut does not signal the all-clear on stability policy. Caution remains appropriate, especially with regard to the most recent wage settlements and the inflationary risks resulting from them." Recent above-inflation wage agreements were one factor that the market had thought weighed against a rate cut.

Switzerland, which operates in a virtual monetary union with Germany, yesterday followed the Bundesbank and cut its discount rate by half a point.

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BUSINESS TODAY

FT-SE 100	3176.2	(+33.9)
DAX	4375.5	(+40.0)
FT-SE 100 All share	1322.45	(+14.03)
Nikkei	16512.22	(+31.48)
Dow Jones	4170.48	(+8.85)
S&P Composite	902.75	(-0.37)

Federal Funds	6.75%	(5.75%)
Long Bond	102.75%	(103.75%)
Yield	7.35%	(7.37%)

3-mth interbank	6.75%	(6.75%)
Life long gilt	100%	(102.75%)
Future (June)	100%	(102.75%)

New York	1.5850	(1.5117)
London	1.5888	(1.6088)
DM	2.2575	(2.2227)
FF	7.8765	(7.8350)
SP	1.1715	(1.1425)
Yen	143.18	(141.97)
E Index	85.8	(85.2)

London	1.4125	(1.3825)
DM	4.9205	(4.8795)
FF	1.1715	(1.1425)
Yen	88.55	(88.40)
S Index	90.8	(89.8)

Tokyo close Yen 88.22		
Brent 15-day (Jun)	\$17.25	(\$17.25)

London close	\$383.35	(\$383.35)
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* denotes midday trading price

Another water company to offer rebates

BY ERIC REGULY

YORKSHIRE WATER is planning to hand back at least £150 million to customers and shareholders in the form of rebates, lower bills and dividends. The move follows yesterday's announcement by North West Water that it is to offer customers rebates until the end of the century.

Trevor Newton, managing director of Yorkshire, said: "We will do a split and most of it will go to customers rather than shareholders." He said that an announcement would be made by the time Yorkshire's final results are reported in early June.

North West, which is roughly twice the size of Yorkshire, unveiled a package worth about £360 million over five years. Two-thirds of it is directed at customers. The company said it wanted to strike a better balance between the interests of its shareholders and its customers.

Each customer will receive an "efficiency rebate" of £6.50, costing the company a total of £18 million, each year until 2000. About £180 million will be spent over the period to alleviate problems such as low water pressure and flooding by sewage-contaminated water.

Shareholders will receive a special dividend of 3.9p, payable on October 3. The dividend will cost £90 million over five years. Brian Staples, chief

executive of North West, said that the package was designed "to address the regulatory risks".

Mr Staples fears that Ofwat, the water regulator, could tighten the regulatory screws if customers continue to complain that shareholders are being treated better than them.

The water industry also fears that a Labour government would impose a windfall tax unless customers received substantial rebates.

Several other water companies are expected to follow North West's lead, although none of them revealed their intentions yesterday.

Lise Shonfield, an analyst with SG Warburg, said that the Southern, Wessex, Severn Trent and Welsh water companies were the most likely candidates to follow suit.

South West Water, whose water prices are under review by the Monopolies and Mergers Commission, and Thames Water are unlikely to follow North West's lead.

The unusual move by leading water companies to hand back funds to customers comes in the wake of the decision by Stephen Littlechild, the electricity industry regulator, to tighten price controls on regional power supply companies.

Pennington, page 23
Tide turns, page 25



Splashing out: Sir Desmond Pitcher, North West chairman, left, and Brian Staples yesterday

George reveals Barings dates

BY PATRICIA TEHAN, BANKING CORRESPONDENT

EDDIE GEORGE, Governor of the Bank of England, has told bankers that the committee investigating the failure last month of Barings, the merchant bank, would report its findings in two stages.

The first part of its report, which will establish the facts behind the collapse, will be ready "in a couple of months". The second stage, which will look into regulatory lessons to be learnt from the collapse, could take three months longer to complete. He said: "So far as possible we will make these facts public."

Mr George was taking questions after his speech about increased competition in the banking industry to the Chartered Institute of Bankers conference in London.

He said the Barings affair was "an old-fashioned failure" on six levels. The Bank's committee would be looking at the six lines of defence that should have prevented the collapse. These were the Barings management, internal auditors, external auditors, and regulators in Osaka, Singapore and Tokyo.

In his speech, Mr George

said there was increased competition in the banking industry which was "not without its dangers". It could lead banks and other financial intermediaries or "incentivised" lending officers to take excessive risks, he said.

The expectations of customers were increasing, and he urged banks to work harder at keeping customers happy.

He said: "There is a good deal that you, in the financial community, can do by simply working harder at your customer relationships."

Barings topped the league of financial advisers on UK public takeovers for the first quarter of the year, having acted on two such deals worth £9.3 billion according to a table published yesterday by Acquisitions Monthly. It was co-lead adviser to Wellcome in its failed attempt to fight off Glaxo's £9.1 billion takeover.

ING, the Dutch banking group that bought Barings this month, yesterday unveiled net profits for 1994 of 2.3 billion guilders (£920 million), at the top end of forecasts, 2.03 billion guilders.

After 'trombone' comes the 'money-back'

BAe calls for £383m to make new VSEL bid

BY ROSS TIEMAN, INDUSTRIAL CORRESPONDENT

BRITISH AEROSPACE is raising £383 million to make a new bid for VSEL, the Barrow-in-Furness shipbuilder — and promising to give shareholders their money back if the offer fails.

The novel cash call came as BAe announced a £300 million order for 12 of its Avro regional jets from Swissair. The airline, which chose the BAe plane to replace the Fokker 100, its chief rival, has taken options on a further 12 Avros, which could push the total order to £600 million.

The contract will provide nine months' work for Avro's Woodford factory. Swissair's endorsement, predicted in *The Times* almost a month ago, confirms a remarkable revival in the fortunes of the four-engined, 100-seat jet. Last year, Luftansa ordered ten for its Cityline short-haul operation.

The rights cash, meantime, will enable BAe to renew its bid battle against GEC without delay if Michael Heseltine, the President of the Board of Trade, decides not to block the rival predators.

The Monopolies and Mergers

Commission will deliver its recommendations to Mr Heseltine on April 12 after a four-month inquiry.

Although BAe insisted it had "no knowledge" of the outcome of the MMC inquiry, it has sent a clear signal of its continued determination to win control of Britain's only builder of submarines and large surface warships.

Chris Avery, analyst at Paribas Capital Markets, the securities house, said the cash call would restore to BAe the financial fire-power provided by last year's ground-breaking "trombone" rights issue. The new fund-raising effectively gives BAe what it would have raised in a second call to finance the cash element of its £573 million bid, had the offer not been referred.

"They are securing the ammunition that they had before for a battle for VSEL against GEC," Mr Avery said. By tucking away a war chest in advance, BAe will be able to launch or increase any future offer without alerting GEC through contacts with underwriters. The new one-for-five

rights issue comes in two stages. In the first phase, the company will raise £170 million at 430p a share. Any money not needed to pay cash to VSEL shareholders in the next bid will be refunded, plus interest at 8 per cent per year.

If VSEL shareholders opt for more than £264 million of BAe's cash, subscribing BAe shareholders will be obliged to stump up an additional £239 million. As a sweetener to its own shareholders, the company is offering warrants at 550p in a disguised cash call likely to raise an additional £100 million over the next five years.

Winning the battle for VSEL would enable BAe to become a prime contractor to the Ministry of Defence in ships as well as missiles and aircraft. GEC, which already owns the Yardway that builds frigates on Clydeside, is keen to block BAe's encroachment. VSEL wants a larger partner, and will settle for whichever is willing to reward its shareholders best.

Tempos, page 24

Protesters ejected after disrupting Lloyds meeting

BY PATRICIA TEHAN AND ANNE ASHWORTH

ELEVEN protesters were ejected from Lloyds Bank's annual meeting yesterday after disrupting the three-hour event with calls for the bank to change policies relating to the environment, the third world and the arms trade.

As the meeting began, the Lloyds branch nearest the venue was evacuated after a suspect parcel was found. It turned out to be merely the remains of an Indian take-away.

The meeting was never going to be plain sailing. One look at the gathering at the Sedgwick Centre, London, was enough to make that clear. There were plenty of retired ladies and gentlemen — those traditionally with enough time to attend AGMs. There were, however, also an unusually large number of young faces — students using their university holidays to make a protest.

The AGM was preceded by an extraordinary meeting, at which Lloyds sought shareholders' approval for its proposed £1.8 billion takeover of Cheltenham & Gloucester Building Society. The board received only a few questions directly related to the takeover —

though many came from the protesters — and the motion proposing it was passed on a show of hands and "by an overwhelming majority" of postal votes, according to Sir Robin Ibb, chairman.

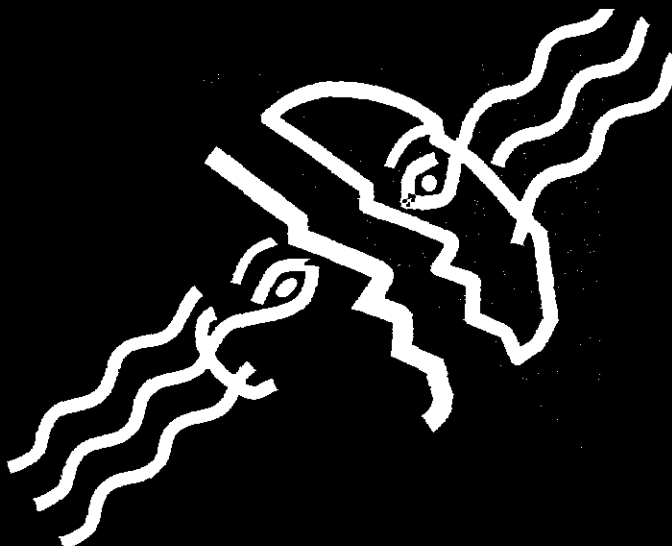
Sir Robin tried to move on to AGM business, but, after a ten-minute disruption, resorted to ordering guards to remove a young woman protester. Others were later removed, chanting "people not profits". They were objecting to Lloyds' funding of customers who sell arms to governments such as Indonesia's, saying that this "aids the regime responsible for acts of genocide in East Timor".

Sir Robin said that the bank makes sure that it funds deals that are legal and have the support of the British Government. C&G members vote on the Lloyds takeover today at a London meeting at which several thousand are expected. The society yesterday refused to be drawn on the outcome, or on any trend emerging from postal votes. However, it appears that the response has been high and that C&G executives are quietly confident of a takeover being approved.

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BMW puts Rover at £5.3m profit

Rover made an operating profit of DM40 million (£18 million) in the BMW accounts, well below the £56 million it reported under British rules. BMW has put Rover's net profit at DM12 million (£5.3 million). Under British rules, there was a £9 million net loss.

Volker Doppeldecker, finance director said: "We have had great success with Rover... it has done better than expected." BMW, which reported a 65 per cent jump to DM1.38 billion in pre-tax profits, added a DM1.50 bonus to the DM12.50 dividend.

Carnaud up

CarnaudMetalbox, the Anglo-French packaging group, warned on margins as it told of an 18 per cent pre-tax profits rise to £1.54 billion. There is a £4.40 dividend, up 10 per cent.

Dawson deal

The new management team at Dawson International is close to selling Dawson Home Fashions, its US bathroom accessories business, to Springs Industries of the US.

Support plea

The withdrawal of income support for mortgage interest payments should be delayed until April 1997, the Council of Mortgage Lenders will tell the Social Security Advisory Committee today.

TOURIST RATES

	Bank	Bank
Australia \$	2.32	2.15
Austria Sch	16.87	16.17
Belgium Fr	46.84	44.54
Canada \$	2.38	2.28
Denmark Kr	0.173	0.168
France Fr	6.55	6.25
Germany DM	2.36	2.17
Greece Dr	381.00	358.00
Hong Kong \$	13.09	12.29
Italy Lira	1,936	1,827
Japan Yen	204.00	196.50
Malay RM	3.80	3.64
Netherlands Gld	2.04	2.15
Norway Kr	10.35	9.75
Portugal Esc	204.50	208.00
Spain Ptas	166.38	166.38
Switzerland Fr	1.75	1.75
Swedish Krona	1.75	1.75
UK £	1.00	1.00

Rates for small denomination bank notes only as supplied by Barclays Bank. Different rates apply to travellers' cheques. Rates as at close of trading yesterday.



Michael Dobson, left, and John Craven, chairman, of Morgan Grenfell, which advised on 107 mergers and acquisitions last year

Morgan Grenfell seeks new London premises

By PATRICIA TEHAN, BANKING CORRESPONDENT

MORGAN GRENFELL, the investment bank owned by Deutsche Bank, is looking in London for new premises in which to base their joint investment banking operations, which are being merged.

One possibility would be to take over the Friends Provident building at 100 Old Broad Street, opposite Morgan Grenfell's 23 Great Winchester Street offices, which is being rebuilt after being damaged by a terrorist bomb two years ago.

Michael Dobson, Morgan Grenfell's chief executive, said that the bank has two offices and a "scholar" office, and "it is not the most efficient way of running a business".

Morgan Grenfell has appointed Weatherall Green & Smith and DTZ Debenham Thorpe, the surveyors, to find

a building that would provide upwards of 200,000 sq ft for occupation in about two years' time.

Mr Dobson said that the bank would probably keep its Winchester Street premises, which it owns and has occupied for 100 years.

Morgan Grenfell yesterday provided further detail of its financial results for 1994. The figures were unveiled by Deutsche Bank in Germany on Wednesday. Morgan Grenfell's profits fell by 34 per cent last year to £150.2 million after trading profits collapsed from £219 million to £30 million.

Administrative costs fell by £40 million to £309 million, part of which is due to a fall in bonus payments. "As profits fall, so do bonuses" said a spokesman, though he refused to discuss the size of bonuses.

Mr Dobson said that, in spite of the profits fall, the

results still provided a better return on capital than some of its rivals. Morgan Grenfell's pre-tax return on average capital employed was 32 per cent compared to 20 per cent at Kleinwort Benson and 27 per cent at Schroders.

Mr Dobson said the bank made "substantial profits" in emerging market operations, though the figure was lower than in 1993.

It advised on 107 merger and acquisition transactions valued at £16.9 billion and is currently advising Scottish & Newcastle in its plans to acquire Courage.

The asset management business added £5 billion in net new business to its funds under management, taking the value of funds to £30 billion. Mr Dobson said it added £2 billion of new pension fund business, taking funds away from some of its

rivals. He said the integration of the investment banking business was "making good progress. We are further down the road than I expected to be at this time".

He said the bank was in advanced discussions with some senior people and would be making further appointments soon. Morgan Grenfell is more likely to beef up its European capability before turning its attention to building up a presence in the UK market, which is the most competitive, he said.

Treasury unveils blueprint for gilts

By JANET BUSH
ECONOMICS CORRESPONDENT

THE Treasury yesterday unveiled more innovations for the gilt-edged market, responding to market demand and furthering its programme of more openness in key sections of policy.

It published a Debt Management Report for the first time yesterday. This follows its decision last year to issue a funding remit to the Bank of England, outlining its desired policy for selling gilts to finance the Public Sector Borrowing Requirement. Yesterday's paper left the Government's projection for the PSBR in the coming tax year unchanged from the Budget at £21.5 billion.

There were three main changes in yesterday's paper, all of which provide the gilt market with more predictability to plan its business. The Treasury hopes that this will help to lower the cost of the Government's funding, although it acknowledges that such a benefit is difficult to quantify.

For the first time, the Treasury announced roughly what proportions of gilts of different maturities will be sold. Over a full year, the Bank will aim to make 15 per cent of its sales in index-linked stocks, with the rest divided into equal thirds into short, medium and long-dated issues.

The Bank will hold eight auctions a year, replacing current monthly auctions. It also gives a firm timetable for the auctions, the first of which will be held on April 26.

An announcement will be made at the beginning of each calendar quarter on which maturities will be sold at the auctions scheduled to be in that quarter.

The Bank of England welcomed the new plans which came a day after its own paper was published on the creation of an open market in gilt repos from January 2, 1996.

BUSINESS ROUNDUP

Invesco raises its full-year dividend

SHAREHOLDERS of Invesco, the international fund manager, were rewarded for their patience yesterday when the group raised the full-year dividend 36 per cent to 4.75p. Invesco, which was almost shut down by Imro, the regulator, in 1993 for breaching rules, is the latest company to use foreign income dividends (FIDs) as a means of increasing the payout to shareholders. The final dividend was lifted to 3.5p. Charles Brady, chairman, said without the FID the year's dividend would have been between 3.5p and 4p.

In spite of difficult market conditions pre-tax profits rose from £33.4 million to £39.3 million in the year to December 31. Profit was struck after a net exceptional profit of £300,000, which included £2 million of redundancy costs, compared with a loss of £2 million last time. Funds under management slipped £3 billion to £42 billion. Of the fall, £1.8 billion was due to the movement in the dollar-sterling exchange rate, while about £300 million was due to a drop in underlying business. Mr Brady said the group had contained costs and lifted operating margins. The workforce worldwide dropped about 100 to 1,343 during the year, and the group expects further losses as it continues to introduce new technology.

Higgs & Hill marks time

HIGGS & HILL, the construction company, is again holding the total dividend at 2.5p a share after maintaining 1994 pre-tax profits virtually unchanged at £1.3 million (£1.23 million). The final dividend is unchanged at 1.5p, due June 7. Earnings rose to 1.5p a share from 0.3p but still failed to cover dividend costs. Turnover rose to £288.2 million (£262.2 million). The company highlighted a reduction in construction division losses to £223,000 from £2.08 million. But property profits fell to £1 million from £4 million, while housing profits were marginally ahead at £2.7 million, compared with £2.25 million.

Littlechild criticised

EAST MIDLANDS ELECTRICITY criticised Professor Stephen Littlechild's latest review of price controls, saying the industry regulator's report had "damaged confidence in the framework of incentive regulation". Norman Askew, chief executive, said: "This is in no-one's interests." East Midlands yesterday announced a reduction in electricity prices of an average 1.4 per cent from next month. The company said that domestic customers will have benefited from an overall 12 per cent reduction in real terms over the past three years.

Pennington, page 23

Alexon defers payment

ALEXON, the womenswear group, is deferring payment on its preference shares in a bid to conserve cash and keep gearing down. Mike Jones, finance director, said preference shareholders would not be paid until the company had achieved a sustained level of profitability. The decision will save £1.6 million a year. The group's bankers have agreed to provide a new two-year facility. Alexon is struggling under £11.5 million of debt, a legacy of the over-ambitious expansion. Pre-tax losses were reduced to £3.7 million from £12 million in the year to January 28. Again there is no dividend. Tempus, page 24

Jupiter Tyndall executives share £15m bonanza

By SARAH BAGNALL

JOHN DUFFIELD, chairman at Jupiter Tyndall, and 40 executives are to share in a £15 million share option bonanza as a result of the £169 million bid for the fund management group by Commerzbank.

The lion's share of the payout is going to top management with Mr Duffield expected to receive about £3 million. Jupiter Tyndall's staff are also being offered a 25 per cent stake in the new company, which will be a subsidiary of the German bank. The value of this holding is tied to the performance of the group over the next five years. There will, however, be no share options or bonuses and directors' salaries are fixed in real terms for five years.

Jupiter Tyndall's management is recommending the bid by Commerzbank. The German bank is offering shareholders 420p a share and a final dividend of 10p. The company's shares rose from 402p to 418p on the news.

Heinz Hockmann, head of asset management at Commerzbank, said: "We don't believe option schemes are appropriate. After the acquisition, participation will only be through share ownership."

That way the growth in value will reflect the growth in the value of the company."

Jupiter Tyndall's senior management are being offered 17 per cent in the new company. "But they are not getting it as a present. They have to buy their way in," said Dr Hockmann. The cost is £3.4 million. Commerzbank is subscribing a further £1.6 million for a further 8 per cent which will be held in an employee trust on behalf of present and future employees.

The resulting value of the shares depends on the performance of the group over the five-year period. According to the offer document, if the company's pre-tax profits grow at a compound rate of 2.5 per cent over the five years the value of the shares will fall to 60 per cent of the initial sum paid. Alternatively, if the group achieves a compound growth rate of 10 per cent the value will rise substantially.

Jupiter Tyndall reported a 55 per cent leap in pre-tax profits to £14.6 million in the year to December 31. Earnings per share rose from 22p to 32p and the group is paying a second interim dividend of 10p, making a total of 16p.

Sir Andrew plans a really useful venue for musicals

By JON ASHWORTH

SIR Andrew Lloyd Webber is exploring the possibility of building a new theatre for musicals in London, linked to a gallery to house his priceless art collection. The composer hopes millions of pounds of royalties from his shows can be diverted into new ventures.

Sir Andrew said there was a pressing need for a new London venue. "There are no musical houses which it is likely we will be able to play in in the next three or four years," he said.

"London needs a privately built, proper, big music house again. Why not let's try and make something that is architecturally exciting and could be linked into my longer term project, that I'd really love to have a gallery in the end for my collection of art in London. I don't desperately want some other great big site off Shaftesbury Avenue. I'd prefer to be



Sir Andrew: "why not try?"

somewhere new and a little bit original."

stage nothing but Andrew Lloyd Webber musicals.

Patrick McKenna, chairman and chief executive, is exploring plans for a theatre complex in Las Vegas. A film division has opened in Los Angeles. The company is also considering joining a consortium to bid for the Channel 5 television licence.

The group, which employs more than 4,000 people worldwide, yesterday announced pre-tax profits of £46.2 million (£33.2 million) for the year to June 30, 1994.

Sir Andrew, who received about £13.3 million in dividends last year on top of his £11.3 million salary, has indicated that he would like more of his dividend income channelled back into the company. He said: "I'd far prefer to see that we had in the company the money to build the theatre that I'm talking about. I've got my composing income, so I'm fine anyway."

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□ Germany has lanced currency imbalance □ Sharing water's gains □ Northern should say no

A close-run thing

□ HANS TIETMEYER'S masked intervention in the currency battle of the past month had all the drama of Blücher's late arrival on the field at Waterloo. It was not quite as important. For many an economy round the world, however, it could mark the day when things looked up.

Currency turmoil nearly always springs from financial imbalances. If not fundamental economic ones. The latest one sprang from what seemed to be matching but opposite turns in interest rates. In America, where rates had risen steadily month by month, Federal Reserve chairman Alan Greenspan suggested that this phase might pause, if not stop altogether. Economic growth had duly moderated and inflation was not accelerating.

In Germany, where short-term rates had progressively fallen since the move into recession, they seemed to have reached rock bottom. True, money supply growth had been brought under control. But the economy was chugging ahead and rates could only rise to keep it in check. Much the same applied in Japan. As the grande dame of corporate traders and speculators tried to absorb the implications, the dollar plunged, while yen and mark were buoyed ever up.

reined back by the elastic of common sense. In practice, the grande dame's cavalry, hurried by occasionally allied official forces, continues to charge until the cause of imbalance shifts.

The direction of that shift is therefore important. It sets the pattern for the next financial phase. If that lasts, it can set the economic tone too. The dollar/mark/yen dance could have been stopped by interest rates rises in America, as well as among central members of the ERM and even in Britain — despite the sudden apparent disdain of the Treasury and Bank of England for the inflationary implications of a weak exchange rate.

Instead, the Bundesbank has cut rates. And by acting late, rather than when currency experts half-expected a friendly gesture, it has caught speculators by surprise and had a much greater impact. It may have been a close-run thing, but the right side looks like winning. Herr Tietmeyer's reasoning need not be explored too far, to save British embarrassment. True to form, the Bundesbank argued that it was acting on

purely domestic considerations. But that included attaching an important anti-inflationary impact to the rising mark.

Who cares, so long as the markets think this is credible? And if Japan manages a further cut in its already-low discount rate, so much the better, both for the dollar and for Japanese firms. For once the market reaction is correct. A cut in interest rates at this time in the cycle is a true sign of confidence that inflation is under control. If it holds, the world economy, and the British economy, will be growing faster next year and beyond.

New version of old values

□ NORTH West Water is trying hard to revive the image of utilities that balance interests of customers and shareholders. But is it too late? The idea of relating price rebates to extra dividends, contended by regulator Ian Byatt, dates back to November, when North West's new chief executive presented his corporate



strategy. Since then, the climate has changed. The barometer was already shifting to stormy; an unremitting scattergun political campaign against privatised utilities thundered on long after the water and electricity price reviews. The needle swung finally in December, when Trafalgar House bid for Northern Electric, prompting Northern to unveil an unsuspected gold vault and its regulator to call a rerun of its price review.

The expiry of golden shares has opened the way for utility bids, giving City investors far more power. They want to squeeze above-average performance from utility shares, whose virtue should be steadiness. Electricity companies had cash

to dispense. But even water companies have come under pressure to pay out more and raise gearing to more financially optimum levels. This breaks the social contract because about a quarter of a water bill goes to capital spending. If companies can safely borrow more, they can charge less without hurting investors.

Mr Byatt's warning over dividend rises implies that water companies that buy their own shares, for instance, court trouble. By contrast, the regulator has long believed in sharing efficiency gains. Welsh Water, which voluntarily restrained prices, earned a more generous review of limits than some investors feared.

The sharing of rewards still allows North West to make a special payment adding 16 per cent to its dividend and to offer annual real increases averaging more than 5.3 per cent. This sounds as though everyone can be happy. In the new climate, however, customers may feel such rises excessive, implying that companies pulled a fast one last summer. If Lyonaise bids

for Northumbrian Water, there might be just as strong a case to tear up the water review as there was in electricity.

Mr Wyser-Pratte's bid for power

□ TODAY is showdown day for Northern Electric, the day its directors finally show what they are made of in the face of a mounting campaign by disaffected shareholders robbed of their rights. Or rather, it isn't.

The lingering row over whether Northern should have accepted the money from Trafalgar House is beginning to look like one of those tiresome cases of corporate arm-wrestling that drags on for so long that all involved but the respective sets of lawyers are praying it will one day end. Guy Wyser-Pratte, New York lawyer turned arbitrator, has set a deadline of midnight tonight for Northern to negotiate or permit a new offer from Trafalgar, or he will call an EGM and compel directors to do so. Northern will, if it is sensible, do nothing of the kind. Mr

Wyser-Pratte's letter to the company displays a weak grasp of UK corporate law even if it does not, as Northern claims, add up to outright defamation. Mr Wyser-Pratte can probably club together with other shareholders, such as Salomon with 6 per cent, to gain the 10 per cent needed to call the meeting.

Precious little can happen thereafter. If Northern is sent away with a mandate to talk with Trafalgar, those negotiations are likely to be, ahem, lengthy. Nothing has changed since the directors said they could not recommend a bid, and nothing can force them to do so while future charges are unknown. Disaffected shareholders could eventually, with enough support, throw the entire board out, but that is one threat Mr Wyser-Pratte has drawn back from.

Fax menace

□ ACCEPTANCE of English law that gives contractual force to deals by fax or telex underpins London's pre-eminence in ship-broking. A US court has ruled that such deals for chartering, selling or buying ships are not binding if the subsequent signing of a formal document is foreseen. This must be reversed. Otherwise, a dangerous precedent will be set for City markets far beyond the Baltic Exchange.

Redland to invest by cutting dividends

By MARTIN WALLER

IN SPITE OF soaring profits and strong trading in Germany, one of its core markets, Redland, the building materials concern, is cutting sharply back on dividends for 1994.

Pre-tax profits last year were 34 per cent higher at £373 million, with improvements made in all the group's markets except North America. But Redland is cutting its final dividend by a third to 11.17p and indicating a similar reduction, to 5.5p, for the this year.

This reduces the total for last year to 19.42p (25p), and indicates a total for 1995 of about 16.6p. Last year's payment was covered by earnings per share up from 26.1p to 33p.

The company says it needs to conserve cash to fund forthcoming capital investment, while the tax regime and the high level of earnings coming from abroad make the current level of payment uneconomic.

But the stock market responded badly to the news. The shares fell 22p to 445p. Analysts were also reacting to caution from the company about prospects for the British economy in the current year.

Robert Napier, Redland's chief executive, said: "The recovery in the UK is going to be less buoyant and less strong than we may have expected a

year or two ago." He said the board believed it necessary to increase the annual level of investment to protect the group's position in increasingly competitive markets. It was £174 million in 1994, up from £138 million in 1993, and £210 million is expected in 1995.

In addition, the heavy earnings from Germany coupled with the sluggish growth expected from Britain had left the group with a substantial problem of unrelieved Advanced Corporation Tax. A reduction of a third in dividend payments this year would save the company £43 million and produce a further £11 million tax advantage.

Redland also announced further measures to improve cash flow. The sale of its half-share in Monier, the Australian roofing and bricks operation, to CSR, its partner, will bring in A\$195 million (£90 million). Redland is also repaying A\$250 million of its auction rate preferred stock, which will further reduce unrelieved ACT.

Mr Napier said it was too early to predict the outcome for 1995, but recent Dutch and German housing permit data were encouraging.

Tempus, page 24

Amec says 1996 will be better

By MARTIN BARROW

AMEC, the engineering and construction group, said that the lack of recovery in its UK markets will make 1995 another difficult year, but it expects to make progress in its overall trading position and sees prospects for further improvement in 1996.

Short-term growth prospects for UK engineering and construction activities will be limited, and Amec said it will continue to reduce its involvement in low margin traditional contracting in favour of higher added value projects. Profitability should improve and the overseas order book increase by 35 per cent.

Operating profits rose to £28.6 million from 26.5 million in spite of a £32 million loss on the sale of Trafalgar Place, Brighton, the company's final speculative property development.

Sir Alan Cockshaw, chairman, said Amec enjoyed a good order book, with stronger overseas content and better margin prospects.

Booker's recipe for growth

By SUSAN GILCHRIST

BOOKER, the food group, is confident of progress in the year ahead after a period of major reorganisation which it claims has laid the foundations for future profit growth.

The group made pre-tax profits before exceptional items of £90.1 million in the year to December 31, up from £69.8 million and at the top end of analysts' expectations.

The bottom line, however, was depressed by exceptional charges of £20.3 million relating to the rationalisation of the group in the past year. Charles Bowen, who was brought in as chief executive just under two years ago, said the group had achieved its short-term priorities of generating more cash, selling peripheral businesses and improving management control.

Mr Bowen said the emphasis would now shift towards driving profit growth through greater efficiency and investment.

The group plans to invest £35 million over the next three years in information technology, vehicles and fittings and £60 million in externally-financed property. A final dividend of 14.7p (14.25p) brings the total payout to 22.4p (21.75p). Shareholders will be paid on July 3.

Tempus, page 24

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THE TIMES CITY DIARY

Unkindest cuts of all

I HOPE Sir Robin Biggam does not believe in voodoo dolls. Alan Diamond, consultant at Redmayne Bentley, the broker, would like to stick pins into his corporate soul, believing Sir Robin is a bit of a Jonah for investors who rely on steady dividends. Sir Robin is a non-executive director of Redland which yesterday cut its dividend. He also chairs BICC, which announced a dividend cut in March, and a non-executive director of BAE, which yesterday made an unexpected rights call for £383 million. Mr Diamond is very concerned about steady dividend income for charities. "Redland was always such a dependable dividend payer and held it through the recession. If only there was a 33 per cent cut in directors' pay to match dividend cuts, charities might not feel so wounded," he said.

Opera first

THE Barings Foundation, may have been forced to restrict its largesse, but is still doing its bit for opera. As well as covering the costs for the English National Opera's appeal for young singers, it has offered to match donations received by today up to an £80,000 limit. When this was announced before curtain up at Wednesday night's performance of *Don Giovanni*, some members of the audience thought they were being asked to stump up for distressed Barings' directors. "You heard a hollow laugh all round the theatre," said a senior man at another merchant bank.



"Fisons want our shirts back - they're leaving Ipswich"

Weighty matters

JOHN HOWELL, Ernst & Young's senior partner for the former Soviet bloc, found himself at the "Britain in the World" conference in Westminster beside Jeremy Paxman, the BBC's Rottweiler TV presenter, and Will Hutton, *Guardian* economics editor, during a pit stop in the city. What amused Dr Howell was that Hutton and Paxman were less preoccupied by the future shape of the nation than by which of their books had sold the most.

Hot water

MICHAEL GREEN, former ITN industrial correspondent this week. For the past two years, he has been away as communications director at British Coal. Now, with most of the assets sold, he has been hired as chief UK spokesman for Compagnie Générale des Eaux, the French utility. If he was after a quiet life, he may need to think again. One of CGE's top men has this week been helping M Plof in his inquiries into payments to Communist Party officials in La Réunion. Out of the frying pan?

DUGALD EADIE, who joined Henderson Administration last November as head of the pension fund, has been "head hunted" as group managing director next month.

COLIN CAMPBELL

The tide turns at last for water customers

Ross Tieman and Eric Reguly look into the industry's pre-emptive strike

Six years after privatisation, the water industry has suddenly discovered that it must please its customers as well as its shareholders. North West Water is to hand £360 million to customers and shareholders over the next half decade, two-thirds of it to those who pay its bills. Other companies are poised to follow suit. With a new clampdown on electricity prices looming, the companies are anxious to ensure they, in turn, do not face a fresh crackdown. Yet their action may be too little, too late. What has gone wrong?

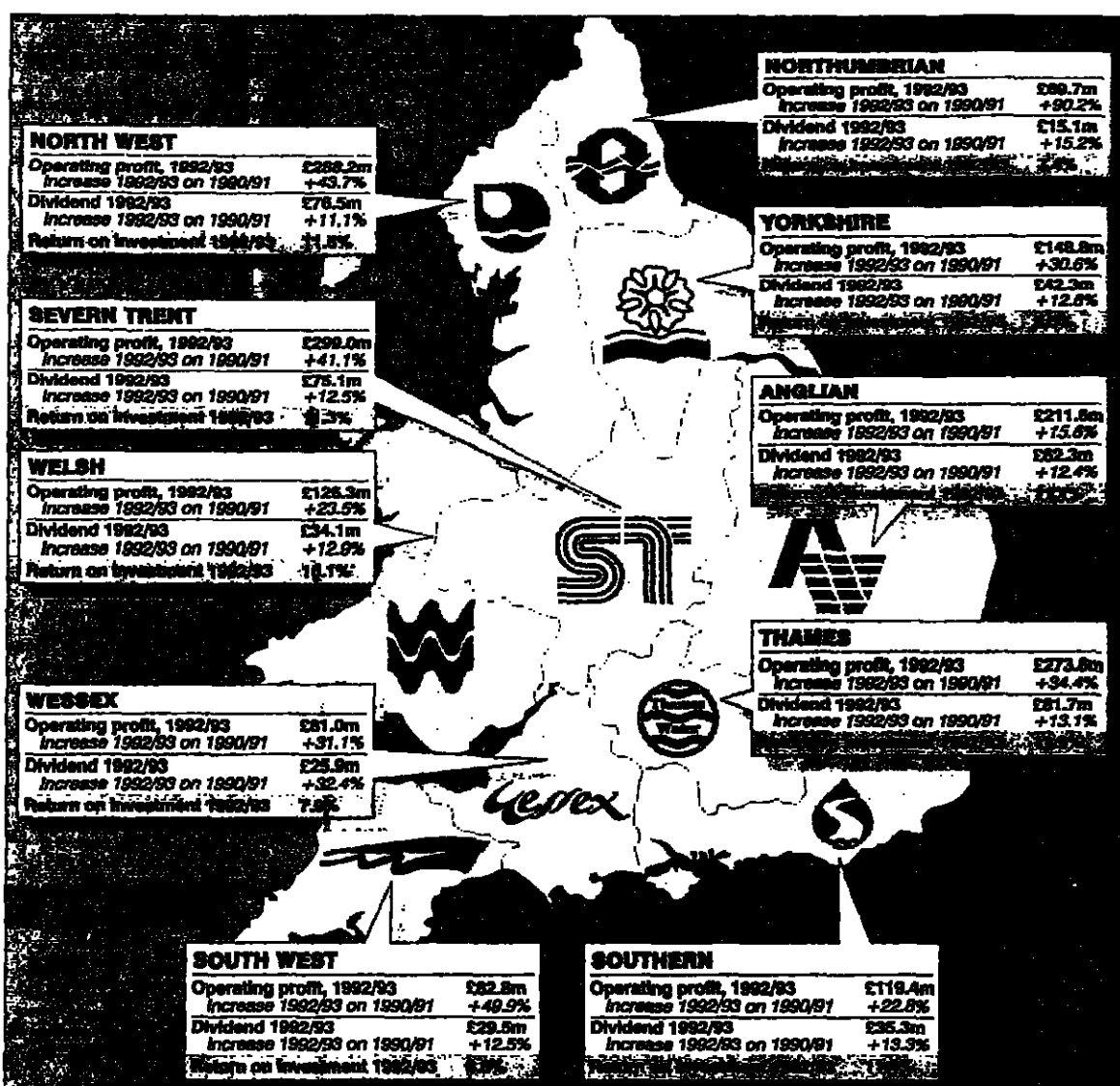
The saga of Britain's water industry begins with the industrial revolution. Concentration of population brought disease. The Victorians responded by building a system to supply fresh water and carry away sewage on which we rely to this day. But post-war governments skimped on investments and the sewers fell into disrepair.

In the local government reorganisation of 1973, responsibility for water and sewerage in England and Wales was wrested from local authorities and vested in ten new water authorities, shaped in accordance with river basin catchments. But funding remained inadequate. Margaret Thatcher ordered their privatisation. On December 6, 1989, the Government sold all ten, at 240p a share, to raise a total of £5.24 billion. Today, the shares are typically changing hands at over £5, some are valued at up to three times the sale price. Why?

Ministers knew the water companies needed an enormous investment programme. To meet European Union standards, they would have to rebuild the sewers, modernise treatment works, stop dumping raw sewage in the sea and improve drinking water quality. The City persuaded the Government that it could not sell the industry if the borrowing burden was too great. Customers would therefore have to finance most of the capital spending directly through their bills, rather than just pay the companies for the cost and risk of borrowing.

As a result, customers are effectively paying a tax to fund investments that will benefit future generations. Historically, the 20-plus local water companies, which continued to exist within the catchments of their big sisters, had financed their investment by borrowing. They were able to do this cheaply, through the issue of preference shares and loan stock. They could levy a rate to cover their costs, a system rejected by the Government as lacking efficiency incentives.

The chosen privatisation regime was designed to introduce efficiency through effective environmental supervision and comparative regulation. The National Rivers Authority was created to safeguard environmental standards. Ian Byatt was installed at the Office of Water Services to ensure the companies could do their job and meet those standards, balancing the



interests of companies and consumers. Figures from the Centre for the Study of Regulated Industries reveal what happened during their first three years in the private sector. By 1992-3, revenues had risen on average by 23 per cent as the ten companies bumped up charges to finance increased spending. Operating profits, meantime, had risen, on average, by 34.3 per cent.

Variations in profit performance were astonishing. Northumbrian Water, now the object of unwanted attentions from Lyonaise des Eaux de France, increased profits by 90.2 per cent. South West increased operating returns by 49.9 per cent. While customers squealed, shareholders were laughing. By 1993, Northumbrian was making operating profits of £69.7 million on turnover of £239 million. One pound of profit in every four was being doled out to shareholders. The rest was rapidly inflating the value of their company. A similar pattern could be seen elsewhere.

The biggest profit gains were achieved where the companies had succeeded in improving their return on capital as they stepped up investment levels. But, increasingly, these rates of return were coming to look excessive in industries with very low and stable risk profiles. By 1992-3, a clutch of companies were earning returns on capital in excess of 11 per cent. In the same year, British Gas, earned a return of 13.6 per cent. But while most British Gas assets were under 30-

years-old, the water companies were reaping rewards from investments made by our great grandparents.

Today, after six years of taking from the poor, its customers, to give to the rich, its shareholders, the industry realizes it has made a mistake. North West Water says it now wants to strike a better balance. To this end, it unveiled a package of rebates, investments and special dividends, worth some £360 million over the next five years, that heavily favours customers.

The other water companies, with the possible exception of Northumbrian and South West are expected to follow suit. Yesterday, Yorkshire said it would announce a similar package within the next two months. It is expected to hand back no less than £150 million to customers and shareholders over the next five years.

In a review last year, Mr Byatt tightened price caps on the industry. Now Yorkshire may choose to forego much of its future income. The review allowed Yorkshire to lift prices by the retail price index plus 2.5 per cent each year until the year 2000. Severn Trent, which in November set aside £47.5 million over two years to reduce customers' bills and improve service, may now feel motivated to lift the value of its package.

The motivation for the rebates is neither guilt nor altruism. They are a pre-emptive strike against tighter regulation, a windfall-profits tax or both. It

is curious that the water companies have taken this long to react. In November 1993, Ofwat suggested that customers were not the true beneficiaries of privatisation. But the industry paid little attention. As bills, and directors' salaries, continued to rise, customers began to howl.

Then, early this month, the regional electricity companies were hit with a bombshell when Stephen Littlechild, the industry's regulator, said he would review prices for the second time within a year. He was astounded that Northern Electric had no problem finding £600 million to give back to shareholders to fight off Trafalgar.

Ofwat immediately stated that the price determination set last year would remain unchanged until the next review in 2000. But not everyone, including Brian Staples, North West's chief executive, believed that. "If there were sufficient pressure, Ofwat would have to do something, especially if a company behaved in Northern Electric style," Sir Gordon, of Yorkshire, agrees, especially if Labour wins the next election. "They will tighten up on regulation or introduce a windfall tax," he said. Indeed, Jack Cunningham, Labour's trade and industry spokesman, charged that North West had not gone far enough. "This is a further demonstration of the hopeless inadequacies of the present regulatory framework, and this Government's unwillingness to do anything about it."

Shell thinks, then does, the unthinkable

Carl Mortished says the world's largest company is preparing a huge shake-up

Stephen Hodge, group treasurer of Shell, looks a little weary. He has an excuse, having spent the last six months reorganising the management structure of the world's largest company. On Wednesday, thousands of Shell employees in London and The Hague swarmed into meetings to learn that the company was doing the once unthinkable: abandoning the cherished matrix, the system of management checks and balances that ensures every decision of the Royal Dutch/Shell group is reached by consensus.

The second shock — although most were well-braced to receive it — was that the consensus view from the committee of managing directors on the 39th floor of Shell Centre is that 30 per cent of the 4,000 jobs at head office must go in order to reduce the \$1 billion central overheads bill. Shell's rivals are looking a little smug, suggesting the company is following where others have led in cost-cutting and critics ask why the company is replacing one set of committees with another. Shell sees things differently. Mr Hodge said the new structure would have a centralising tendency to remove past conflicts between the powerful regional co-ordinators who currently compete along geographic lines with management responsible for product sectors, such as exploration, chemicals and refining and marketing.

"Because of the balance of power, the matrix had the effect of leaving authority with a powerful country chief executive," he said. Competing managers at Shell head office could be playing off against each other by the operating companies, anxious to preserve their independence. But the new structure devised by Mr Hodge and his team, with the assistance of McKinsey & Co, is unlikely to please those who want a flattened Hanson-style management structure. Five business committees for the five product sectors will determine strategy. But where is the chief executive to fall on his sword if it all goes wrong?

"There isn't one," Mr Hodge says. "The chairman's role is to make it work. What he has got to do is ensure they don't sit in a warm cosy glow, congratulating each other."

"People have said to me 'why don't you give bottom-line responsibility to one man?' That is all right if you are running a sweet shop. Decisions made at Shell come home to roost in five years. What would happen to a chief executive if his decision was wrong? He would get early retirement."

Mr Hodge compares Shell with other international companies. Royal Dutch/Shell's £4 billion of profit came top in 1994, while profits from Shell's downstream business also came within the top ten in the previous year. But Shell is not relying on its size to fend off challenges in a world of low oil prices and thin margins. Addressing the staff on Wednesday, Cor Herkströter, chairman of the managing director's committee, said Shell's return on capital was too low. Now about 9 per cent, the management is being told to target 15 per cent and Mr Herkströter, concedes it will take more than a cut in the head office budget to achieve it. Mr Hodge agrees: "The extra income has to come out of the operating companies."

Analysts say net savings from staff cuts will be less than £100 million per year while the market is expecting net profits of about £5 billion in 1997 with a return on capital of 12-13 per cent. Some point to Shell's annual \$10 billion capital spend and suggest a more generous dividend and fewer big projects might do the trick. But Mr Hodge has little time for such talk, pointing to a big US oil company that cut back investment and bought in its shares. "It sent a signal that they don't believe in the oil industry. We do."

Hence the drive to cut costs. Shell Centre and its counterpart in The Hague were built to house 10,000. Soon there will be less than 3,000. To justify even this number, Shell needs to raise profitability, Mr Hodge concedes. "If we cannot find the right projects, then we will have to decapitalise the company, but we do not see that yet."

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Seaboard options

From Mr David Elligate Sir, In taking you to task (Business Letters, February 24), the Seaboard chairman, Sir Keith Stuart, offers a new angle in the parade of privatised utility bosses trying to convince the public that their directors are underpaid. The savings related share option schemes which he mentions were granted as part of the government flotation package, or under the Seaboard chairmanship of George Squair. The "matching offer" scheme which Sir Keith outlines allowed staff to buy up to 300 shares at market prices. Assuming that they could afford to buy, they cannot realise any profits on their investment, or their free 300 shares, for two years. At today's prices, a profit of some £150 in late 1995.

Contrast this with the executive directors' outstanding share options "averaging just over 100,000 shares each". They get an immediate profit of some £500,000. Am I right in thinking that, when getting the largest slices of the corporate cake, the Seaboard directors aren't too worried about a few crumbs dropping on the floor? Yours faithfully, DAVID ELLIGATE, (Seaboard shareholder), 39 Overhill, Southwick, West Sussex.

Takeover time?

From Dr J. F. Doughty Sir, If the regional electricity companies could hand over the industry regulator so easily, how can we be assured the water companies are not pulling the wool over the eyes of their regulators? Anyone want to make a takeover bid? Yours faithfully, JOHN DOUGHTY, 17 Pelican Mead, Ringwood.

Questions answered on Nuclear Electric privatisation

From the Chief Executive, Nuclear Electric Sir, Pennington, March 29 (The real ultimate privatisation) was right to observe that Nuclear Electric's six modern AGR and PWR stations could be privatised right now - and would be a profitable investment from day one. He raises three questions. Firstly, how would the closure costs of Magnox stations be funded? The answer is by a combination of four elements: Cash already in the bank (now over £2 billion and rising rapidly); the remaining income from the nuclear legacy until it ceases in 1998 (over £1 billion a year); proceeds from the sale of the privatised company; and a very healthy cash flow from the Magnox stations themselves while they

still operate. There is also every possibility their lives can be extended, as has already happened with Bradwell which is now cleared for possible operation to 40 years. Secondly, market share. Professor Littlechild wants real competition between UK nuclear generators. In practice, he would have it - a Magnox company with about 8 per cent UK market share, EDF with 5 per cent through the Channel link, Scottish Nuclear with 6 per cent, and Nuclear Electric's privatised AGRs and PWR with 16 per cent. The privatised company would be the same size as PowerGen, capable of offering serious competition to them and to National Power and the independent fossil fuel generators (at 23 per cent and 21 per

cent respectively), while at the same time being capable of sustaining a future nuclear programme with all its export potential. It is difficult to see how allocating two English AGR stations to Scotland could improve anything. Thirdly, investor attitudes. A great deal of work has been done on this, not least by US-UK merchant banker Morgan Stanley. It is clear that there is more than enough interest and knowledge among potential investors, both within the UK and internationally, to ensure the success of such a privatisation. Yours faithfully, Dr Robert Hawley, Chief Executive, Nuclear Electric Plc, Barnwood, Gloucester.

The risks involved in reforming the regulation governing Recs

From Mr Dermot R. Glynn Sir, Irwin Stelzer, March 24, writes (Long arm of the regulator needs to be strengthened), that by "creating a [regulatory] structure which contained no constraint on profits, the Government tilted the playing field in favour of investors, at the expense of consumers."

He recommends a reform whereby we move "at least partially away from RPI-X to some regulation of profits" by setting "prices based on RPI-X, but then review those prices every five years, to see whether the RPI-X formula is producing returns in excess of those required to compensate shareholders fairly". Any profits above a "reasonable" level would accrue to shareholders for a five-year period, after which prices would be lowered to a level that, prospectively, promises to yield only reasonable profits, with

the incentive to beat that target being the right of the companies to keep any 'excess' for the short-term five-year period. Investors and the Recs were under the impression that this was the method of RPI-X regulation already in place. The agreement between Professor Littlechild and the Recs last year on the prospective price reductions over the next five years was based on financial modelling by Ofwat, designed to allow a "reasonable" return to investors. The professor may or may not have made some forecasting errors: as Mr Stelzer says, "X is an inherently arbitrary figure". The reason why the reopening of the agreement within a year is such a fundamental attack on the deal between investors and consumers is that such regulation based on hindsight removes the combination of assurance of long-term rea-

sonable profitability with incentive to efficiency which has led to such dramatic improvements in the productivity of all the privatised utilities. There is no free lunch. If the damage to the regulatory system cannot be contained, any one-off benefit to consumers from reopening the agreement will be at the expense of higher costs, from lower efficiency and increased regulatory risk in financing costs, for all the utilities sharing the current regulatory methods. Yours faithfully, DERMOT R. GLYNN, Managing director, National Economic Research Associates, 15 Stratford Place, London W1.

Letters to the Business and Finance section of The Times can be sent by fax on 0171-782 5112.

TRADING PERIOD: Settlement takes place ten business days after the day of trade. Changes are calculated on the previous day's close, but adjustments are made when a stock is ex-dividend. Changes, yields and price/earnings ratios are based on middle prices.

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1994/95	Low Company	Price	%	%	PE	High	Low Company	%
154	750	149	+5	1	12	111	750	149
155	620	149	+5	1	12	111	750	149
156	230	149	+5	1	12	111	750	149
157	180	149	+5	1	12	111	750	149
158	110	149	+5	1	12	111	750	149
159	85	149	+5	1	12	111	750	149
160	75	149	+5	1	12	111	750	149
161	70	149	+5	1	12	111	750	149
162	65	149	+5	1	12	111	750	149
163	60	149	+5	1	12	111	750	149
164	55	149	+5	1	12	111	750	149
165	50	149	+5	1	12	111	750	149
166	45	149	+5	1	12	111	750	149
167	40	149	+5	1	12	111	750	149
168	35	149	+5	1	12	111	750	149
169	30	149	+5	1	12	111	750	149
170	25	149	+5	1	12	111	750	149
171	20	149	+5	1	12	111	750	149
172	15	149	+5	1	12	111	750	149
173	10	149	+5	1	12	111	750	149
174	5	149	+5	1	12	111	750	149
175	0	149	+5	1	12	111	750	149
176	0	149	+5	1	12	111	750	149
177	0	149	+5	1	12	111	750	149
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THEATRE page 30

A study in deprived power: Paul Theroux's *The Mosquito Coast* comes to the stage



ARTS

POP page 31

New from New England: Juliana Hatfield's most confident (and noisy) album yet



Beneath the Savage breast

Odd that dressing up in women's clothing should be a career option for men, but that's entertainment. Once upon a time, we were used to seeing Danny La Rue on our television screens. Begowned and bewigged, he would step out regally on *The Good Old Days* or *Sunday Night at the London Palladium*, twirling a parasol and singing in tones not quite male, not quite female either. Such was the era of post-austerity variety, though, that jaws dropped open willingly, if only in admiration of a second skin of sequins, lace and ostrich feathers.

Nowadays, such a reaction requires a post-modern twist. RuPaul, for example, is skyscraper-tall, lithe as a supermodel. Recently, he and Elton John flattered and cooed their way on record through the previously heterosexual lyrics of *Don't Go Breaking My Heart*. The joke, such as it was, lay in the resultant subtext.

La Rue, RuPaul... different eras, yet essentially the same conceit: that of men parading in the guise of exaggeratedly elegant, sexually alluring women. Paul O'Grady starts from the opposite perspective. Lily Savage, his alter ego, is a brash, Birkenhead ex-hooker who dresses in the style of glamour gone sour. She favours fake animal-skin prints and junk jewellery. There are dark roots visible in her peroxide blonde hair, and the cheap stilettos are scuffed. A sharp tongue and a weakness for the bottle, not to mention the most lurid of family histories, constantly throws her membership of the League of Catholic Mothers into question. Neither an air-brushed beauty then, nor the low-budget approximation of one that is a staple of the gay cabaret scene.

There are a few very good drag acts in the pubs and clubs, especially the really seasoned old troupers. "allows O'Grady, a former peripatetic social worker with Camden Council, who shares Lily's Scouse heritage. "But all too many of them

Alan Jackson on how Paul O'Grady found fame by cross-dressing down in fake fur



Lily Savage in leopardskin

are guys who think they look good in a frock and so make it their mission to persecute the rest of us. And, unfortunately, that colours people's perceptions of what drag is in Britain; they think it's some tragic soul standing on a beer crate in the corner of a bad pub, miming to Shirley Bassey or Dusty Springfield. You feel like saying to them: "This is so self-indulgent. You'll never look the part, so if you're intent on doing this, why not do it at home!"

The dressing-up bit has never been his own motivation, he insists. "As a kid, I was never in my mother's wardrobe, trying on her wedding dress and singing into the hair dryer." Rather, Lily's persona

and look developed as a reaction against the familiar iconography of drag. It was the early Eighties, and O'Grady was working evenings behind the bar of a pub in Vauxhall, an area he refers to as South London's Barbary Coast. Students, hoorays and fashion victims would gather for the vicarious thrill of mixing with the sexual demi-monde, and between after-hours drinking and the odd police raid there was a weekly talent competition, "Ladies' Night".

"You'd get the most awful acts imaginable: strippers who would go as far as taking their false teeth out; people who'd lie down on broken glass without knowing how to do it properly. But mostly you'd have this rag-bag of miscreants in Bri-Nylon C&A frocks bobbing about to something by Salsoul or Minnelli. So when eventually I put myself forward to compete the thing — because it meant more money — I decided to enter into the spirit by dressing up too. Not in the usual style, though. I'd have on a pelmet of leopardskin under a mangy old coat off the market and be carrying a huge handbag. God forbid, but there'd be holes in my tights too. Then I'd go out and attack the audience verbally, before they could attack me. Great training, of course, because they'd eat their young alive."

Over the course of nearly a decade, the act — if not the character of Lily herself — has been refined to the point where a whole family mythology is now in place. For example, fans know that her son, Jason, is currently in Risley Remand Centre following charges of arson, and that daughter Bunty has just married the Hell's Angel father of baby Kylie Marie. An extended cast of similar off-stage characters allows O'Grady to confront both social and sexual prejudices with a quick-reflex skill that has won him nominations for both Perrier and British Comedy awards. But it is more a measure of his success that mainstream TV is now so anxious for his



Paul O'Grady feels his fame was delayed: "Because of Lily, I'm treated as a woman, and TV is much more wary of female comics"

presence. And there, whether hosting *Top of the Pops*, guesting on *Brookside* or sharing a sofa with *This Morning* hosts Richard and Judy, he brings an enjoyably barbed edge to a bland medium.

The transfer to household name status might have happened sooner, but for the nature of his act, he feels. "Because of Lily, I'm treated as a woman, and TV is much more wary of female comics, be they Jo Brand or Gayle Tuesday, or whoever. If you're a bloke in a T-shirt and jeans, meanwhile, you do a couple of nights at Jongleurs and you're almost guaranteed your own series." Ironically, this belatedly raised profile has brought accusations from some long-term follow-

ers that he has sold out. "I try and explain that I've done nearly ten years on the factory floor, and that now I'm quite keen to have a go in the office. And I make sure I do lots of no-fee benefit appearances too, to make it clear I haven't forgotten where I've come from."

He envies talent as versatile as that of Harry Enfield, saying: "All I can offer is me, or me in a wig. That limitation, coupled with the flurry of work offers coming his way now, makes over-exposure a real possibility, but O'Grady says he is determined not to become this season's media whore. And though a brief, non-Lily appearance in the Jim Sheridan film *In the Name of the Father* has given him a taste for

further acting experience, he is not holding his breath. "I get offered roles as drug addicts, pushers or bitter rent boys well past their sell-by date — that's a Liverpool accent for you. It's like being Bradford-Asian. Casting directors think you can only play pimps, burglars or cab drivers."

Achieving fame at 39, albeit beneath a towering wig and slash of scarlet lipstick, leaves him wryly amused. "No one in my family has ever done anything like this. The men were all either farmers or merchant seamen, and if anyone's name was in the papers, it was in relation to a minor offence." Luckily, he doesn't have to deal with being recognised in the street, as it

is Lily, not Paul O'Grady, who is the star. He has the same friends as before, lives in the same South London council flat, and does not even have to worry about being outed, "because I was never in". The main difficulty in life is that it costs a fortune to look cheap. "If you find exactly the sort of sequinned ocelot-print fabric that she would be mad for, you can guarantee it's going to be £90 a metre," he mock-sighs.

● Lily Savage hosts *Live from the Llydrome on LWT and Granada tomorrow at around midnight. A 36-date tour of Britain, Ireland and the Channel Islands begins at Dargford Orchard Theatre on April 2 and continues until May 21.*

THEATRE: One celebrated venue can stay open thanks to a lottery windfall

Unicorn saved from extinction

THE NATIONAL Lottery has saved its first theatre. The Unicorn Arts Theatre, training-ground of young talent for nearly 70 years, will not now have to close in December thanks to the £98,000 it was

awarded as one of the nine lottery beneficiaries announced by the Arts Council yesterday.

"It won't make any difference to what we do," says Richard Williams, the artistic

director of what he likes to call the National Children's Theatre. "It will simply mean we're still here to do it."

The Unicorn is the leaseholder of the 340-seat Arts Theatre in Great Newport

Street, right in the heart of the West End. As with many other fringe venues, the advent of stiff new legislation after the Hillsborough disaster meant that the theatre faced the choice of either improving safety standards or closing.

"We found ourselves with a programme of work costing £265,000 and no means to pay for it," Williams says. A plan was devised to be carried out over three summers: £167,000 was raised for the first two, but the last phase was, until yesterday, unfunded.

Unicorn took over the lease from the original Arts Theatre Club in 1978. It then hired the space out to other companies in the evening, which is still the arrangement. Richard Williams became artistic director in 1990, and changed the company's name to the Unicorn Arts Theatre to reflect his belief that there is no real dividing line between children's theatre and adult theatre.

"I WAS struck by something in the audience when I saw Nick Hornby's *Magic Flute* at the ENO," he says. "There were grandparents, parents and children together, enjoying it. We're not trying to get into the psyche of a seven-year-old here, but to create a solid piece of theatre."

This season Williams commissioned Unicorn's own adaptation of *The Magic Flute*, with the libretto adapted by Jeremy Sams after the successful version of *The Tempest* by the poet Liz Lochhead last year. Another poet, Adrian Mitchell, is working on a Beatrix Potter piece.

At present *Fever Pitch*, the adaptation of Nick Hornby's soccer memoirs, is playing to unflagging audiences, but will have to close in July for the installation of the new, lottery-funded sprinkler system, lavatories, fire alarms, upgraded ventilation and hose reels.

Unicorn is now just about solvent, but the freeze in subsidy means that they are teetering on the edge. "But there's so much to be done," Williams says, "and the lottery money will ensure that we are still here to do it."

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- ▶ Through Standard Life Fund Management we have a growing presence in the unit trust and PEP market.
- ▶ Changing structures of regular premium life and pensions products redesigned to offer greater flexibility and better returns on early surrender.
- ▶ In accordance with SIB requirements, Standard Life is reviewing its personal pension transfer and opt out business where it was responsible for the sale but expects to find few policies which require redress.
- ▶ The regulatory system is imposing substantial cost on policyholders and the Personal Investment Authority has an obligation to ensure that it acts only where real benefit to customers is involved.
- ▶ A very high proportion of with profit funds is invested in equity-type assets which Standard Life believes will provide policyholders with the best long term rates of return.

Canada

- ▶ Individual life premiums increased and good progress was made in the segregated fund markets.
- ▶ Mutual fund sales increased and six new funds were added to the portfolio.
- ▶ Heavy investment made in information technology to improve further the administrative processes.

Republic of Ireland

- ▶ Total new premiums increased by 45% with large increases in sales of investment bonds and major successes in the sale of pension products.
- ▶ Life assurance industry fighting to counteract public criticism of commission levels and mis-selling. Standard Life welcomes the actions being taken, all of which will benefit consumers and its business.

Spain

- ▶ Prosperity SA, purchased in 1993, expanded its branch network by one third and its new business by two thirds with significant potential for further growth.
- ▶ The long term outlook for the insurance industry is very positive in the light of expected reductions in State provision of pensions and medical benefits.

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POP ON FRIDAY: All hits and no messing about — that's the ticket, Bob ... the flip side of Juliana ... votes for women

Dylan lives up to the legend

The transition from voice of a generation to legend of the old guard cannot have been an easy one to make, and the gap between Bob Dylan's achievements and expectations is now a yawning chasm. How best to bridge it is a problem that will dog him to his dying day.

His seat is still reserved at the top table of rock, but he has not had a single near the British chart since 1978. His ageing core of fans still hangs on his every word, but he patently has nothing left to say. Apart from "greatest hits" and old bootleg compilations, his last two albums comprised desultory performances of ancient folk songs. He was a star attraction at last year's massive Woodstock festival, but, as a touring act, his natural habitat is the theatre or large club (Brixton Academy's capacity is 4,200, and Wednesday was his first of three nights there).

In the past, Dylan reacted to the pressure of his abnormal situation by ignoring everything but his own personal whims. This has made for some pretty shambolic live performances. When he toured here in 1991 with a band that was learning the songs as it went along, it looked for a moment as if he might go the way of Chuck Berry or James Brown and end up a sad caricature of himself.

That may yet be his fate, but not on the evidence of this show. With an *Unplugged* album due next

CONCERT: The great man does the right thing by his songs, the Brixton Academy through and David Sinclair

month (more old songs, performed acoustically on MTV), he opted, with typical perversity, for a set that was firmly plugged in. Flanked by shadowy men in cowboy hats, he looked slim and resplendent as he took the stage in tight jeans, a long, shiny blue shirt gathered at the waist and, most surprisingly, no guitar.

Half of his band — bass player Tony Garnier and guitarist John Jackson — have accompanied Dylan ever since that 1991 tour, while Winston Watson (drums) and Bucky Baxter (steel guitar, mandolin) have also been on board for several years. As they pushed off with a relaxed but alert *Down in the Flood*, it was immediately apparent that these four players have developed into a formidable and highly sympathetic unit and, more importantly still, that Dylan was making a serious attempt to project himself to the audience. Instead of the usual introverted

mumbling, he actually addressed the words and melody of the song, capping it off with a harmonica solo that was almost structured and an ending that had obviously been rehearsed. This was a revelation.

The attention to detail continued during a sympathetic version of *I Want You* and, after Dylan had strapped on a Stratocaster, a powerful Hendrix-style reading of *All Along the Watchtower*. There was no new material, and no outrageous liberties taken with the familiar arrangements as a rollcall of old favourites unfolded, among them a relaxed *Just Like a Woman*, a brisk, staccato *Tangled Up in Blue*, a delicate *She Belongs to Me*, marred only by Dylan's frightful guitar soloing, and a chunky *Maggie's Farm*.

There was a brief acoustic section incorporating *Don't Think Twice It's Alright* and *Mr Tambourine Man*, which the crowd adored, and an impressive sequence of encores: *Ballad of a Thin Man*, *It Ain't Me Babe* and *Like a Rolling Stone*. Well-paced and well-judged, this was Dylan in spellbinding form.

The same, alas, could not be said for Elvis Costello, who opened the show. Armed with just an acoustic guitar, he ploughed through a selection of his most dolorous songs to general indifference. Indeed, the level of conversation in the audience was so great during his part of the show that it sounded more like a cocktail party than a gig.



As Marc Bolan, the metal guru of rock criticism once put it, Bobby's alright, Bobby's alright, he's a natural born poet, he's just outta sight

NEW ALBUMS: Juliana Hatfield goes looking for a fight, which Prince loses

The wimp gets physical

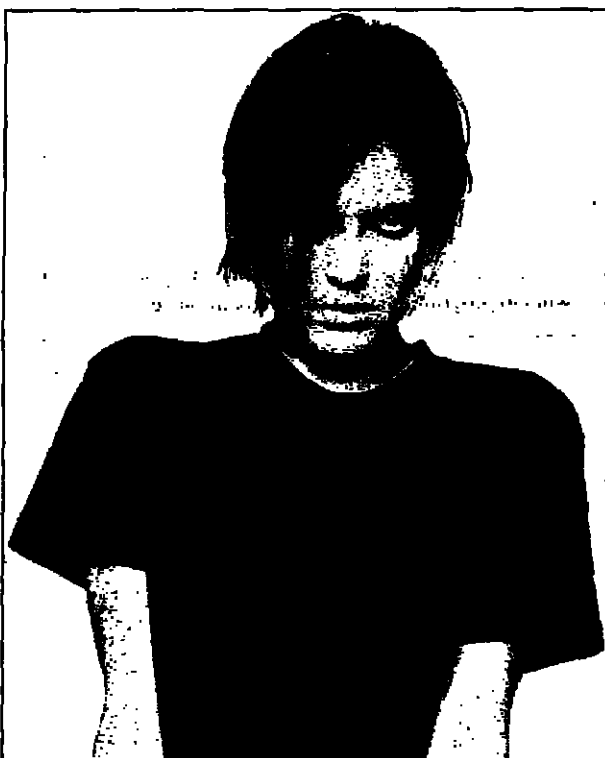
JULIANA HATFIELD
Only Everything
(Mammoth/east west
4509-99886)

THE Boston babe-led bands are enjoying something of a vintage year. With new albums from Belly and Throwing Muses already in the shops, it is now the turn of Juliana Hatfield — formerly of the Blake Babies, Lemonheads and her own Juliana Hatfield Three — to fly the flag on behalf of the New England alternative rock'n'roll sound.

Recorded at Fort Apache studios, still the heart of the Boston scene, and co-produced by Paul Kolderie and Sean Slade (who number the likes of Dinosaur Jr, Radiohead and Hole among their previous clients), *Only Everything* is by a considerable distance Hatfield's most confident and downright noisy offering yet.

Much heavier than *Become What You Are*, her previous album, it combines the swelling, grunge-guitar aesthetic of J. Mascis with a sensitive singing style and the sort of pseudo-psychological lyrics much favoured by Kristin Hersh. "Am I only dreaming or did I wake up dead?/Throw me in the garbage", Hatfield sings in *Live On Tomorrow*, a gentler piece (musically) that details various trials of the flesh and spirit in nerveless detail.

Despite the echoes of Sonic Youth, Nirvana and the Pixies, which can be heard all



Who would ever have guessed that inside Juliana Hatfield there was a hard-rocking mama just itching to burst out?

over *Only Everything*, Hatfield successfully stamps her own distinctive mark on material ranging from the opening full-tilt rocker, *What A Life*, to the slow, stately finale of *You Blues*. And if this all sounds as if she is having her cake and eating it, then that is about the size of it. And a tasty package it is too.

NEW POWER GENERATION
Exodus
(NPG Records/Edel/Pinnacle 6103-2NPG)

WHETHER Prince is performing "anonymously" on *Top of the Pops* with his head completely swathed in a scarf, or insisting that "music should be free" to large gatherings of admirers who have each paid £27.50 to reap the benefit of this wisdom, the royal squiggle's behaviour increasingly marks him out as a loose cannon on the deck of pop.

Exodus is the latest salvo to be fired off in the battle against his record company, Warner Bros. The album is "produced, arranged, composed and performed by" Prince's backing group, the New Power Generation. Their crafty lord and master is, supposedly, not involved, but there are no prizes for guessing the identity of the "mystery" musician called Tora Tora.

It is said that executives at Warner feel that Prince issues too many records, with a resulting loss of quality control. Listening to *Exodus* you can see their point. Although it hums along with a restless, vibrant energy and boasts many fine performances, it is basically an album of improvised, deep funk grooves and hastily assembled backing tracks. These are stitched together with a succession of druggy, spoken-word routines.

Compiled by MRS

For his part, the man we must now call Tora Tora has declared the album to be "an experiment in truth". But with the threat of legal action by Warners looming, *Exodus* sounds more like a trumped up exercise in contractual brinkmanship.

FREAK POWER
Drive-Thru Boogie
(4th and Broadway 524 063)

PROMPTING widespread indifference when it was first released last October, *Drive-Thru Boogie* is being re-launched in the wake of the recent Top Three success of the single *Turn On/Tune In, Cop Out*. That song, which memorably served as the soundtrack to the Levi's advertisement featuring a glamorous transvestite shaving in the back of a New York cab, is typical of the album's understated charm.

An alliance between singer and trombone player Ashley Slater (previously of Microgroove) and former Beats International supreme, Norman Cook, now playing guitar and singing, Freak Power have set up their stall where the pop end of rare-groove meets 1970s retro.

The message is kept deliberately vague — "We got karma, we am what we am" pretty well sums it up — but slick soul grooves, such as *Change My Mind*, featuring electric piano, flute, wah-wah guitar and Slater's croaky, Sly Stone-influenced vocals, have an infectious appeal and a dynamic charge that goes straight to the feet.

ROYAL TRUX
Thank You
(Hut 7243 8 40206)

A SPECTACULARLY degenerate bunch of misfits from New York, Royal Trux are the underground link between the Rolling Stones and Sonic Youth. Among some mediocre performances, and almost buried under a ton of murky attitude, there is a handful of truly great songs on *Thank You*, a rough, bluesy collection unlikely to be mistaken for the new Duran Duran album of the same title.

Approximately tuned guitars hunch against the beat during *Map of the City*, a heroically slovenly lament with a splendid, descending chorus, while *Ray O Vac*, a relatively lighthearted, country-rock singalong, finds the voices of Jennifer Herrema and Neil Hagerity clinging to each other for support, like a pair of winos stumbling down an alley late at night.

DAVID SINCLAIR

I am woman, hear me raw

From Yoko Ono to Courtney Love, the riot grrls get a few things off their chests in a trio of new books

There comes a time in a music journalist's life, usually around the age of 30, when the realisation hits home that they have never written anything longer than 2,000 words. Which means they only have 2,000-word ideas, and 2,000-word dreams, and, worse still, 2,000-word pay cheques. Massive drifts of depression tend to set in, followed by an increasingly urgent desire to do something worthwhile.

And so they write a book. Usually it's either a fairly entertaining stagger through *My Drug Nights With The Bass-Player* From Special School or dull historical porridge about how the Beatles nicked everything they knew from Chuck Berry. Oh, like, thanks. Cheers for reminding us, we'd all forgotten for ten minutes, etc.

But this spring has seen a bizarre trend of stunningly well-written books that stretch your brain and swell your heart with every page. And, even more bizarrely, the best three books deal with Gender in Rock — and it's not boring.

Karen O'Brien is a BBC World Service producer and freelance writer. Her second book, *Hymn to Her: Women Musicians Talk*, is very simple in format — brief introduction to each artist, then seven or eight pages of pure, uninterrupted quotes from the musicians, covering any subject they wish, but mainly concentrating on the music industry and the problems of being a woman therein.

Its power lies in the non-bias — an almost heroic lack of ego on the part of the author allows, for instance, the reader to like Yoko Ono within two paragraphs, and, by the end of the chapter, positively howl with indignation at her mistreatment over the years. Mo Tucker, Kirsty MacColl and Suzanne Vega also come across clearer and stronger than they do in "normal" interview, because their own agendas within the music industry are not diluted or corrupted by the agenda of, as is usual, a male journalist.

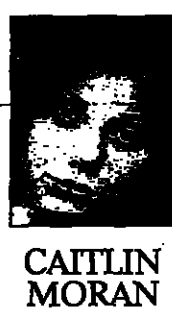
Whatever anyone says, there is a difference between male and female journalists and musicians. All the musicians interviewed become exceedingly indignant at reviews and interviews that have concentrated on, and even denigrated, the shapes of their bodies and the way they style their hair. Things have not progressed one jot since the 1950s, when, Ono recalls, "People didn't say to a woman: 'What do you do?' Women were either beautiful or not very beautiful."

The music industry is still sadly fuelled, in the main, by male fantasy, and men do not usually fantasise about absurdly talented singer-songwriters with 32in waists. This is why you do not see many absurdly talented singer-songwriters with 32in waists — they're out there, but they won't be on your television, on your radio or in your record shop until more women within the industry start waving the cheque book.

Amy Raphael's book *Never Mind the Bollocks: Women Rewrite Rock*, is roughly similar in format to *Hymn to Her*. Raphael provides a bitter-

document her experiences, and to theorise about feminism — and... pop music, and it's still not enough. She quotes widely from Susan Faludi, Naomi Wolf and Toni Morrison's novel, *Sula*, and talks frankly about her husband's feminism (one of Kurt Cobain's last quotes was "The future of rock belongs to women"). If anyone wishes to understand what Love has had to go through, this is definitely recommended.

Finally, Simon Reynolds and Joy Press's *The Sex Revolts: Gender, Rebellion and Rock'n'Roll*, by Simon Reynolds and Joy Press (Serpent's Tail, £4.99)



CAITLIN MORAN

the boo radleys

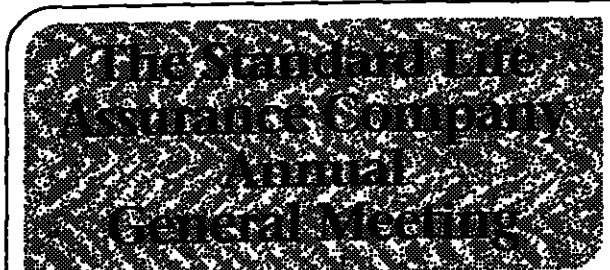
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The 169th Annual General Meeting of the Company will be held in the Head Office, 3 George Street, Edinburgh on Tuesday 25 April 1995 at 2.30pm.

A member entitled to attend and vote is entitled to appoint a proxy to attend and vote. A proxy need not be a member.

By order of the Board of Directors
D M Simpson
Secretary
Edinburgh, 30 March 1995

Policymakers may obtain a copy of the Annual Report and Accounts, including the agenda, by writing to the Customer Service Information Team at PO Box 141, 1 Tanfield, Edinburgh EH3 5RG or by telephoning 0131 - 245 2030. Proxy forms may be similarly obtained by members entitled to vote.

STANDARD LIFE

- 1 The Colour Of My Love..... Celina Dion (Epic)
- 2 Medusa..... Annie Lennox (PAA)
- 3 Made In England..... Elton John (Rocket)
- 4 Wake Up!..... Boo Radleys (Creation)
- 5 Greatest Hits..... Bruce Springsteen (Columbia)
- 6 Elastic..... Elastic (Deceptive)
- 7 No Need To Argue..... Cranberries (Island)
- 8 Paradise..... Blur (Foco)
- 9 Subhuman Race..... Skid Row (Atlantic)
- 10 The Bends..... Radiohead (Parlophone)

Compiled by MRS

David Guest sifts through the information on project managers and comes up with career prospects in this relatively new IT area

Putting yourself in the frame

If you have the right technical talents, you can command a high salary in information technology. Though the technologies in demand come and go, managerial skills, political acuity and personal flexibility are not so transitory.

Project management, a relatively recent discipline in IT, is also one of those areas that commands a high salary. Jim Mackay, an adviser on large projects for the Computer Management Group (CMG), says: "Project management has been around for 10 to 15 years. Before that group leaders did the same sort of job, but the role was not as well defined. In IT, we still don't have the career structure in project management properly sorted out."

Geoff Wright, a senior project management consultant with the Garton Consulting Group, based in Redhill, Surrey, believes that this question of structure is being resolved in favour of project man-

agers. "Trends in business are moving their way," he says, citing the popular practice of organising work into a series of projects performed by adaptable teams. "I think the potential is unlimited for most people. Project management gives them a more rapid exposure than do other areas to the hierarchies of their companies."

Mr Wright says the financial rewards show similar potential. "You will find a lot of people calling themselves project managers who are earning very low salaries. But take, say, a project manager in his early thirties in charge of replacing a foreign exchange system which would involve demanding users, pressure to perform, a team of four or five people and three or four technical interfaces, and he'll be on £35,000 to £40,000 a year. A good project director for a very large project is guaranteed to be earning more than £100,000."

Mr Wright and Mr Mackay

agree that there are drawbacks to project management. Mr Wright says: "You can be carved up. You need political as well as technical astuteness, especially at a senior level. And the stop-start nature of the work disturbs some people. When you complete a project, you might have nothing to do until the next one comes along, and some people aren't happy in that kind of environment."

Mr Mackay adds: "If something goes wrong on a project, the project manager is exposed to blame. It is also difficult to bill project management as a high-level executive position in a static organisation. Projects go through and then teams are disbanded."

Mr Wright joined IBM as a graduate entrant on the technical sales support side, moving up through systems analysis and design. Until recently, that would have been regarded as a typical route: now, he says, high-flyers



Good project managers should have "political" and technical skills, says Geoff Wright

from the business community have established a second line of approach.

Mr Mackay has set up a project management development group at CMG and the skills he looks for go far beyond the technical. "It can

be very helpful and useful if you have done the jobs the members of your team will be doing, to be sure people are on the right track. But as projects get larger, there is more effort in managing the surrounding environment. You become more of

a project director and political awareness is important.

"At this stage, the problems are likely to be in the management of sub-contractors. It is not uncommon to have a dozen or more organisations contributing to a

large systems-integration project, and it is quite tough." Mr Wright, who has experience of setting up similar project manager career development programmes, candidly admits: "You can't tell who will succeed. I would say that at least 70 per cent of the knowledge needed comes from actually doing the job, as opposed to training and the use of tools."

Attitude is important, Mr Wright says. "People must want responsibility and to have as much of the resource as possible under their control. Genuine project managers are prepared to take responsibility and stick their necks out."

As well as advancing a career in IT, project management might also broaden it into the business world beyond. Could a project manager from an IT background take on a large project in another area? Mr Mackay says that he would probably have 60 or 70 per cent of the skills needed for a construction project, "but my technical limitations would bring me up short."

On the other hand, as Mr Wright points out, in large projects the technical skills should be embedded in the team. "It depends," he says, "on the size and nature of the project as to whether you really need the indigenous background—and that can be in IT, business or industry."

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INFOTECH

Open.gov.uk is the address that you need to access the first steps taken by the Government to enter the information superhighway. But will having an electronic address for the Internet really mean more open government?

Call up the Government online and underneath a photograph of Big Ben and the Houses of Parliament are links to a variety of information areas, from careers in the Royal Air Force to the Economic Development Office for Bristol, and from the Communicable Disease Surveillance Centre in the Department of the Environment.

It is only a pilot service and information on most of the topics is limited. The DoE information, for example, is merely a page entitled Basic Credit Approvals for Local Authorities, but at least it can no longer be said that Britain is completely missing the point when it comes to talk of the digital revolution.

The Treasury has its own electronic address but the rest of the Government's electronic area is run by the CCTA. Once the Central Computer and Telecommunications Agency, the CCTA now describes itself as the Government Centre for Information Systems.

It defines its role as promoting the effective use of information systems by the public sector and has just completed a prototype of what it calls a "community access

Could open government now be on the cards?

Matthew May looks at the first steps by the Government to give the public information by going online

terminal". This public sector version of a multimedia kiosk can mix pictures, text and voice on a computer screen to present information and read a smartcard.

The purpose, says the CCTA, is to demonstrate the potential for central and local government, giving the public "integrated information from a single access point".

This week the agency hosted a

meeting of officials from the Group of Seven industrialised nations to discuss "Government On-Line" — a joint project looking at such areas as how to introduce the use of electronic mail and video-conferencing between governments. It is also examining how to introduce online transactions between government and business — such as licensing applications and tax —



The shape of things to come: a public multimedia kiosk activated by a smartcard

and providing government information online that can be accessed from the home and in libraries.

Will all this activity really mean a more open government? Quite probably. If governments take the decision to use the information superhighway, and the usual reasons of cost saving and efficiency feature high up on the CCTA's list for doing so, then more open

government is a likely result whether it is wanted or not.

Charles Cox, who runs the public sector division of Hoskyns, the large computer services company, is convinced a new era is on the way. "As information and government services become increasingly accessible to citizens in their homes — via the information superhighway — the accountability of the

Civil Service to the citizen will intensify and open government will be given real meaning," he told a conference of more than 300 civil servants last week.

Add to this, for example, the ability of smartcards to carry credits for service entitlement and real markets in public services with the citizen as direct purchaser could soon emerge," Mr Cox said.

Whatever the impact of the CCTA's plans, if a nation is to go online it would by no means be limited to central and local government. The British Library, for example, has just put Magna Carta online using the most user-friendly face of the Internet, the World Wide Web.

It means the library can include high-quality graphics and colour photographs. Internet users around the world can now view Magna Carta as a complete image, zoom in on specific sections and read a translation of the original Latin text.

The library's electronic address also includes images of important new acquisitions, music from manuscripts in forthcoming exhibitions and a "virtual tour" of the new building at St Pancras.

But other countries are ahead of us. This week Singapore announced an online service that will allow its citizens to access the national library with a personal computer. Subscribers in schools, homes and offices will be able to search the library's catalogue, reserve and renew books, check loans, and request home delivery.

Internet World Wide Web addresses: CCTA Government Information Service <http://www.open.gov.uk> HM Treasury <http://www.hm-treasury.gov.uk> British Library <http://portal.bl.uk/>

Chips with everything

INTEL is close to completing work on its idea of making microprocessor chips, like Intel's Pentium, do more of a computer's functions.

The company says that the dozen wires and six or seven add-in cards needed to allow the average computer to handle multimedia and communications applications can be eliminated.

But the idea has met with a cold reception from some others in the computer industry. Manufacturers of add-in cards, modem links and other computer peripherals do not necessarily share Intel's vision of an all-purpose chip.

Forum date

NICHOLAS Negroponte, the multimedia guru, will speak at a Times/Dillons forum next Thursday, April 6. Mr Negroponte, head of the Media Laboratory at MIT in Boston, will be discussing the digital revolution on the day his new book *Being Digital* is published.

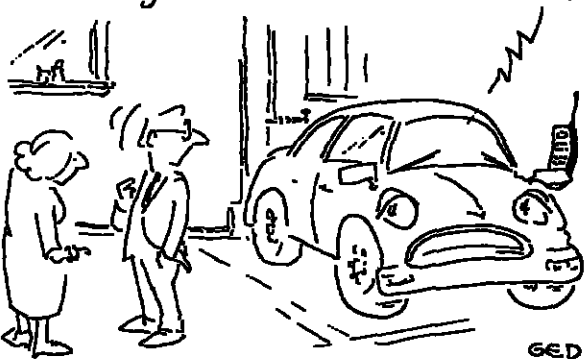
The forum will be held at the Institute of Education, 20 Bedford Road, London WC1, at 7.30pm. £10 tickets (concessions £7.50) include a £2 reduction on the book and can be booked by telephone at Dillons: 0171-915 6613.

Net widens

ACCORDING to MCI Communications, most Internet users are men aged between 25 and 35. But, says the US

ONLINE

It's Joe, at the garage... would you like a word with him?



Listen, I'm breaking down

IMAGINE a car so smart that it can diagnose its own mechanical problems and report them by telephone to a mechanic... Imagine learning from your mechanic, before that gasket blows, that you need to make a repair... and imagine avoiding breakdowns on a lonely, dark road.

Bob Frankenberg, chief executive of Novell, the software company that specialises in computer networks, says that his company is already working with a large car manufacturer and could introduce such a system in 1998.

The object is to find a way automatically to collect and transmit data from car computers to mechanics or dealers who can then alert drivers to needed repairs.

telecoms company, which is planning to offer businesses a way to provide online shopping on the global network, all this will change radically in the autumn. The introduction of Microsoft's Windows 95 will, it says, open up the Internet to about 50 million additional users.

Sound waves

WHEN the surf calls nowa-

days it beeps. About 430 dedicated windsurfers have subscribed to a Californian paging service that tells them at work or home when the wind is right.

The paging service, Call of the Wind, is the idea of inventor and windsurfer Jim Martin. His network covers 14 areas in California. When the onshore breeze hits about 14mph, customers get beeped.

Looking east

THE world's largest multimedia computer exhibition and conference is to be held in Singapore from May 23-26. Dreamt up by Bill Gates, Microsoft's founder, the exhibition is in recognition of the fact that the Asia Pacific region is one of the fastest growing markets for multimedia and CD-Rom.

Products on show for the first time will include a surveillance system that can monitor up to eight cameras in different locations from a single personal computer by telephone from anywhere in the world.

China calling

THE Chinese Government says it expects that all of its urban households will have a telephone by the year 2000. China has only 43 million telephone lines for its 1.2 billion people, but predicts this will rise to 114 million lines by the end of the decade. But with a telephone line in China costing 5,000 yuan (£400) — a year's average wage — and waiting lists hitting six months, it will be a tough task.

In trouble

CRAY Computer, a manufacturer of supercomputers, has filed for bankruptcy protection from creditors under Chapter 11 of the US bankruptcy code. Cray Computer has no direct relationship to Cray Research, the largest US supercomputer maker.

Infotech is edited by Matthew May. E-mail address: mat — times@delphi.com

Build confidence with a screwdriver

PAYING £3,000, plus VAT, for a five-day course on personal computers may seem excessive, even for the high-tech training industry, Matthew May writes.

But if it includes the right to take away a personal computer that you built yourself, perhaps the cost is not so high.

The idea comes from Chartercourt Technology, based in Romsey, Hampshire, which says it is aiming the residential course primarily at company bosses who have personal computer "technophobia" and promising that customers will never again be

Computer-blind executives are offered the inside story of the PC

at the mercy of "computer jargonisers".

Chartercourt says it will require all those who attend to build their own computer before receiving any tuition on how to operate business software packages.

"Many of today's top executives have either been able deliberately to avoid using PCs or have not had the opportunity to learn because computers were not common-

place during their education," says Nick Hoskins, marketing director of Chartercourt.

"These people are not inspired to attend a basic software course more commonly available, but require a more stimulating challenge as a reason to gain more knowledge in something that has left them cold."

The building section of the course has been devised by Tom Porter, the author of

Build Your Own Computer, a book that purports to explain how a PC can be assembled on a kitchen table with nothing more than a screwdriver.

After 10 to 12 hours' tuition, says Mr Porter, he expects those on the course to be ready to switch on their PCs. "By this stage the candidate has a much stronger understanding of the PC and the application of the software on to hard disks makes more sense."

In order to "add confidence", Chartercourt says it will provide a year's support for the self-built PCs and a five-year guarantee.

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

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of computer operations and support, IT service management, major project management and best practice operational processes and procedures. Experience of managing a major roll out of a new technical environment covering PC/LAN and UNIX based platforms is essential. Strong people management skills and the personal presence and maturity to be credible at all levels in the firm are required, as are a commitment to delivery of service and the capability to operate effectively and responsively in a growing and rapidly changing environment.

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 102.4. RADIO 4: 1580d/1715fM; FM-92.4-94.6; L/W 198. RADIO 5:
 393d/1433m; 909k/2330m. LONDON RADIO: 1152k/128fM; FM
 97.3. CAPITAL: 1548d/1184m; FM-95.8. GULF: FM 94.9; WORLD
 SERVICE: MW 648d/2463m; L/W 199k/12 (1245m-5.55am). CLASSIC
 FM: FM-100-102. VIRGIN: MW-1215, 1197, 1242 k-Hz. TALK RADIO:
 MW 1098, 1053d/Hz. Listings compiled by Peter Deane. *Globe Mail*

decisively by 4, ... QdI+.

Endangered species and missed deadlines

A thick shell can be useful protection sometimes, just so long as it doesn't slow you down. On the night that brought us Carlton's effective *Animal Detectives* about the doomed turtles who morosely lumber down the beaches of Sri Lanka, two other programmes highlighted the human equivalent. Absolutely *Fabulous* returned to BBC1, with Jennifer Saunders continuing to adore the performance of her life as Edina, a soft, fleshy fashion victim staggering on high heels under the burden of voluntary enslavement to feng-shui, toning tables and belly-burner rings; while Channel 4's *Whose News?* season reached Nicolas Kent's *The Tabloid*, in which Martin Dunn, doleful doughboy British Editor of *The New York Daily News*, withstood perpetual attacks by simply turning his impenetrable back and assuming a blank, turtle-like expression of Great Age.

Last night's *Animal Detectives* (ITV) was a good story, told in a grown-up fashion. Chaps from the Environmental Investigation Agency visited Sri Lanka and the Maldives to trace the illegal trade in turtle shells (they gave us to understand that whereas several million baby turtles formerly scurried down the beach at full moon, wheeling their flippers like clockwork, bath-tubs, you'd now be lucky to find one or two). Working undercover with hidden cameras, Dave and Allan visited shops, factories and even the slaughter houses, compiling their case. At every stage they asked "Is it against the law, all this?" and were reassured. "No, no! No problem!"

How these chaps restrain themselves from standing up and yelling, "You're all under arrest, you bastards!" beats me completely. Perhaps they have acquired a protective shell of their own. Meanwhile the turtles are dragged out of

the sea and brought to shore, where the shells are removed with long knives, rather as you might run a knife round a freshly-baked cake in a tin. The turtles are still alive and suffering when this is done, incidentally, so the cake analogy is only approximate. Formerly, the most ghastly image associated with turtles was from Tennessee Williams's *Suddenly Last Summer*—the babies racing to the sea to escape the flesh eating birds that made the sky almost as black as the beach! But that particular massacre seems quite wholesome, by comparison.

In Absolutely Fabulous (BBC1), an operation equally radical and bloody would be necessary to turn Edina and Patsy into human beings. Let's hope it never happens. The third (and final) series got off to a hilarious start, with a self-indulgent day-trip to New York—Saunders towering

REVIEW



Lynne Truss

down Fifth Avenue. Joanna Lumley in snakeskin trouser suit slinking alongside—off against the petulant Saffy (Julia Sawalha) waiting at home in a big, ugly sweatshirt for her mother to wish her happy birthday.

The kitchen, which burnt down at the end of the last series, was finally redecorated by the exasperated Saffy, in a suburban style that had screw-you resentment written

all over it. "I thought you liked some of the ideas in the *Conran* book?" Saffy prompted (when she could still be bothered). "But that's depressing in itself, isn't it, darling?" pouted Edina. "Why is it no matter what you're doing, whatever you want, there's always a *Terence* book about it?" Patsy joined in, though without moving her upper lip. "A piece of muslin and a wicker cot," she sneered, "and suddenly it's Tuscany." The last word was spat out contemptuously, as she later spat out a bent cigarette.

How does Saunders keep it up? "Why can't you have floppy hair like other teenagers?" Edina yells at Saffy. Chucking her new despot's personal organiser out of the kitchen window with a ritualistic "Give me back my life!" she immediately scans magazines for a new one. "And don't think you're so clever," she warns Mother (June Whitfield). "I've started Repressed

False Memory therapy: I'll get something on you yet. Oh yes, you in a wood in a hood. It's all coming back to me."

The best story in *The Tabloid* (Channel 4) was not in the pages of *The New York Daily News*; it was told offhandedly by a young, hard-bitten, Chard-like female columnist as she drove back across town at 5pm. Diet Coke clutched to the wheel, knowing she didn't have a story. "I used up my quota of missed deadlines in my first six months here," she said. "I had a six-pound tumour cut out and after that I went a bit wild drinking all night and smoking four packs of cigarettes a day. I think I overdid it."

Local passions run high about *The New York Daily News* (there is usually a picket outside), but otherwise its operation seemed much like any other newspaper: ie. no Superman in sight. The personnel

reflect the usual callous news-biz following the mayor's daily "meetings" for example, on the headlines that he'll be shot in the head (what else?) strutting in a lay-up with his mobile, and nearly wept with indignation when his interview with an accomplice murderer on an accomplice unusable. Funny had to be felt sorry for him. You couldn't. And back in the ne whole operation waiting on at their computers, beating Onassis to die. One remnant how George V was given their extra dose, to nudge him in advance of *The Times* front-page headline (nobody wanted his death, announced in "the lesser organs of the afternoon"). With consummate *Daily News* style, Jackie teased the *Daily News* until 10pm, dying too late for the country editions, but just in time for the special 16-page pullover filled with pics.

BBC1

- 6.00am Business Breakfast (30966)
- 7.00am BBC Breakfast News (95602054)
- 9.05am Killy (s) (5753325)
- 10.00am News: Regional News and Weather (Ceefax) (7143306) 10.05am EastEnders — The Early Days (r) (Ceefax) (8155509)
- 10.35am Good Morning with Anne and Nick Family magazine (s) (7490073)
- 12.00am News (Ceefax), regional news and weather (1906764) 12.05pm Pebble Mill with Gloria Hunniford (r) (772677) 12.55pm Regional News and weather (1532578)
- 1.00pm O'Clock News and Weather (Ceefax) (19344) 1.30pm Neighbours: Debbie and Michael look to the future. (s) (Ceefax) (77059257)
- 1.50pm Crown Prosecutor (r) (s) (Ceefax) (35219764)
- 2.20pm Holiday Jill Dando is in the Bahamas. Carol Smilie travels to Corfu. (r) (s) (Ceefax) (74000325)
- 2.50pm The Flying Doctors: Dead Reckoning (r) (s) (Ceefax) (1197580)
- 3.35pm Cartoon (2498290) 3.45pm Bites (2410054) (s) 4.00pm Jackanory: The Twitches on Holiday Continuing Roy Appa's story (4724325) 4.10pm Rugrats (s) (8442219) 4.25pm The Borrowers (r) (s) (Ceefax) (9669303) 4.55pm Newsround (2165324)
- 5.05pm Blue Peter (s) (Ceefax) (6542689)
- 5.35pm Neighbours (r) (s) (Ceefax) (551870)
- 6.00pm Six O'Clock News and Weather (Ceefax) (665) 6.30pm Regional news magazines (615) Wales: Wales Today (615)
- 7.00pm Wipeout: Answers and questions with Paul Daniels (s) (Ceefax) (2580)
- 7.30pm Tomorrow's World: Science and innovation (s) (Ceefax) (899)
- 8.00pm A Song for Europe 1995: A chance to select Britain's entry for 1995. (s) (Ceefax) (4035)
- 9.00pm Nine O'Clock News: Regional News: Weather (Ceefax) (1073)
- 9.30pm French and Saunders Go to the Movies: A compilation of cinema spoofs from the comedy team. (s) (Ceefax) (313967) Northern Ireland: Anderson on the Box (99073) 10.30pm A Song for Europe 1995 — Results (447832) 10.50pm French and Saunders Go to the Movies (970561) 11.30-11.55pm FILM: Saturday Night Fever (1977)
- 10.10pm A Song for Europe 1995 — Results Terry Wogan returns the results of the earlier phone-in vote (s) (Ceefax) (413528)



Travolta and Gorney hot it up (10.30pm)

- 10.30pm FILM: Saturday Night Fever (1977). High-energy Seventies disco film starring John Travolta and Karen Lynn Gorney. Directed by John Badham (Ceefax) (6970621) Wales: Paper Dragon (24141) 11.00pm FILM: Saturday Night Fever (70033) 12.45pm FILM: Vamp (1992/4) 2.15pm News: Headlines, Weather (7491438)
- 12.15am FILM: Vamp (1992/4) Three college students looking for a stripper stumble upon a mysterious exotic dance venue. Starring Grace Jones (Ceefax) (161975) 1.45pm Weather (8175826)

BBC2

- 6.20pm Open University
- 8.00pm Breakfast News. (Ceefax and signing) (6032967)
- 8.15pm Germany 1925-32 (b/w) (4199122)
- 8.20pm Quantum: Ancient Whispers. The first of a three-part documentary on the "big bang" theory (r) (3600886) 8.50pm A Week to Remember (b/w) (6006219)
- 9.00pm Daytime on Two. Educational programmes. Plus for children 10.00-10.25 Playdays (166615) 1.45pm Come Outside (2638783) 2.00pm Johnson and Friends (8747458)
- 2.15pm FILM: Face to Face (1990) starring Elizabeth Montgomery, Robert Foxworth and Ronald Lacey. A drama set in Africa about the conflict between an eminent paleontologist and non-nonsense British mining expert. Directed by Lou Antonio. (Ceefax) (s) (948532) Includes, at 3.00pm, News and weather 3.50pm News (Ceefax) and weather (8520493)
- 4.00pm Today's Day. Recent history quiz (s) (528)
- 4.30pm Ready, Steady, Cook (s) (412)
- 5.00pm Esther. A discussion on weddings (s) (1306)
- 5.30pm All in the Mind. Lateral thinking quiz (s) (764)
- 6.00pm Captain Scarlet and the Mysterons (r). (Ceefax) (917306)
- 6.25pm The Champions. Vintage adventure series (r). (Ceefax) (465431) 7.15pm The O-Zone (s) (86743)
- 7.30pm Top Gear Motorsport. (Ceefax) (s) (141)
- 8.00pm The Photo Show. (Ceefax) (s) (9870)
- 8.30pm Gardeners' World. (Ceefax) (s) (5677)
- 9.00pm Steptoe and Son (b/w) (r). (Ceefax) (9615)

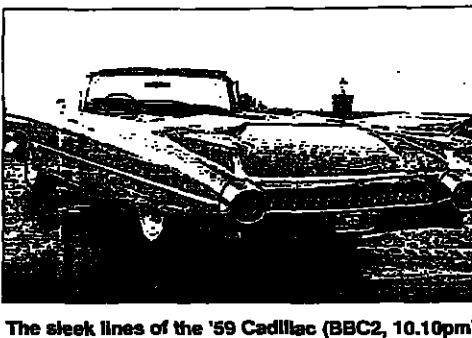


Anderson and Earth First's Ingleby (9.30pm)

- 9.30pm Our Man in... The Timberlands. (Ceefax) (s) (311508)
- 10.10pm The Car's Star: The '59 Cadillac (r). (Ceefax) (s) (404670)
- 10.30pm Newsnight. (Ceefax) (67344)
- 11.15pm Fantasy Football League (s) (252986). Wales: Welsh Lobby (252986) 11.45pm Fantasy Football League (252986) 12.15pm Duckman (1306623) 12.40pm The Artist Formerly Known as Prince (3666178) 1.05am-2.40pm FILM: Build My Gallows High (401333) 11.45pm Duckman (s) (618509)
- 12.10am The Artist Formerly Known as Prince. Veronica Webb talks to the singer who was once known as Prince (1383772) 12.30pm Weather (3666178)
- 12.35pm FILM: Build My Gallows High (1947, b/w) starring Robert Mitchum. A classic, moody thriller about a former private detective who owns a mobster a favour. Directed by Jacques Tourneur. (Ceefax) (830197) Ends at 2.15

VideoPlus+ and the Video PlusCards
The numbers next to each TV programme listing are Video PlusCards (VPC) numbers which allow you to programme your video recorder to watch a particular programme. To programme your video recorder to watch a particular programme, you need to enter the VPC number for that programme into the video recorder's memory. For more information on VideoPlus+ and the Video PlusCards, see the VideoPlus+ section on page 40 of the VideoPlus+ guide.

CHOICE



The sleek lines of the '59 Cadillac (BBC2, 10.10pm)

Weighing two tons, 20 feet long and six feet wide, the 1959 Cadillac was a monstrous affirmation of United States wealth and arrogance. Some called it the American Rolls-Royce, though Rolls would never have stooped to the vulgarity of these huge tail fins and lashings of chrome. By the straitened 1970s, when the oil crisis demanded smaller, less ostentatious cars, the Cadillac was ridiculed as an anachronism. Today it is back in favour, eagerly sought by collectors willing to pay silly prices. In another hugely enjoyable piece of motoring nostalgia, Quentin Wilson charts the genesis of the car, talks to enthusiasts and anchors its rise, fall and resurrection in the changing social history of the nation in which it was conceived.

Our Man in... The Timberlands
BBC2, 9.30pm
"The tree is the problem. I'm here to get to the root of it," quips Clive Anderson as he makes for Eugene, Oregon, the self-proclaimed timber capital of the world. The trouble is, he cannot see the wood for the forests. But stick around, the jokes get better. Anderson's mission is to report on a classic confrontation. On the one hand are the loggers, who depend on timber for a living. On the other environmentalists are campaigning to save the trees, not to mention the northern spotted owl. Anderson mentions it a lot, usually to squeeze out a few more gags. Perhaps surprisingly, the eco-lobbyists come out badly, being portrayed by Anderson as barmy, guttural-piped hippies and a bit nasty with it.

Badass TV
Channel 4, 11.05pm
The late hour is appropriate for a tour of black popular culture, first seen as a pilot during the Channel 4 *Black Christmas* season and now promoted to a series. Rapper Ice-T is joined by Andrea Oliver to present a show that is billed as "funny, irreverent and sexy", which is Channel 4-speak for do not let it near the easily shocked. As a taste of what to expect, one of tonight's items concerns the search for a porn star of the 1970s called Larry Dorg. He has recently become famous in the United States after sensational claims about his manhood were made in a court case. Also included are a profile of the rap entrepreneur Charles Stetler and a studio performance from the teenage rap and reggae prodigy, Vicious.

Ruth Rendell Mysteries: Vanity Dies Hard
ITV, 9.00pm
The quality of Ruth Rendell's dark tales is that they are densely structured, that even when nothing very much appears to be happening on the surface, the subject is brimming with pointers. *Vanity Dies Hard* is ostensibly about the disappearance of a woman who has been acting strangely. But this is no conventional detective story, rather a subtle exploration of love and jealousy through the interplay of up to a dozen expertly-drawn characters. In episode two the new marriage of wealthy Alice (Eleanor David) to her younger husband (Mark Frankel) is under strain as she pursues the missing Nesta to Brighton. Peter Egan and Leslie Phillips also shine in an intelligent and satisfying entertainment. Peter Waymark

CARLTON/LWT

- 6.00am GMTV (7104561)
- 9.25am Chain Letters with Ted Robbins (3549493) 9.55pm London Today (Teletext) and weather (8143764)
- 10.00pm The Time... the Place presented by John Stapleton (s) (727844)
- 10.35pm This Morning presented by Judy Finnigan and Richard Madeley (2635615) 12.00pm London Today (Teletext) and weather (1902948)
- 12.30pm ITN Midsouth News (Teletext) and weather (2474431)
- 12.55pm Coronation Street (r). (Teletext) (2459122) 1.25pm Home and Away (Teletext) (5737328)
- 1.55pm The Chrystal Rose Show. A studio discussion on breast cancer (s) (35336431) 2.25pm A Country Practice: Harry and Kate visit Jules in Sydney (s) (74003412)
- 2.50pm High Road: Sneddon finds a surprising ally. (Teletext) (7521988) 3.20pm ITN News headlines (350325) 3.25pm London Today (Teletext) and weather (358938)
- 3.30pm Rosie and Jim (s) (2415987) 3.45pm Warner Brothers Cartoons (2403122) 4.00pm Zzzap! (r) (s) (844635) 4.15pm Tiny Toon Adventures (6764122) 4.40pm The Geeks (Teletext) (s) (9305509)
- 5.10pm After 5 with Carol Keating (Teletext) (6636236)
- 5.40pm ITN Early Evening News (Teletext) and weather (520035)
- 6.00pm Home and Away (r). (Teletext) (812752)
- 6.25pm London Tonight (Teletext) (701870)



Bruce Forsyth with the contestants (7.00pm)

- 7.00pm Bruce Forsyth's Play Your Cards Right. The comedian hosts the gamewhow where prizes are won or lost on the turn of a card. (Teletext) (s) (4948)
- 7.30pm Coronation Street. Ken finally reaches the end of his tether with Denise. (Teletext) (967)
- 8.00pm The Bill: Lost and Found. London has to tackle a violent rent boy. (Teletext) (3698)
- 8.30pm The Upper Hand. Romantic comedy starring John McGann and Diane Weston. (Teletext) (s) (5431)
- 9.00pm [CHOICE] The Ruth Rendell Mysteries: Vanity Dies Hard (Teletext) (s) (9667)
- 10.00pm News at Ten (Teletext) and weather (32031)
- 10.30pm FILM: The Great American Sex Scandal (1989) starring Bronson Pinchot and Heather Locklear. The lives of 12 average Americans are irrevocably changed when they are selected as jurors on an embezzlement case that turns into a sensational sex scandal. Directed by Michael Schultz (5389229)
- 12.20am London Tonight (Teletext) (4516081)
- 12.30pm One to One. Gary Davies talks to former Soft Cell front man Marc Almond (7135178)
- 1.05pm The James Whale Show (s) (3418587)
- 2.05pm The Chart Show (s) (610826)
- 3.00pm Noisy Mothers. Rock and heavy metal music magazine (s) (9585862)
- 3.55pm Cinema, Cinema, Cinema (s) (871284)
- 4.30pm The New Music featuring The Baranek Ladies, Alice Cooper and Borrowed Tunes, a tribute to Neil Young (50365)
- 5.30pm ITN Morning News (39791) Ends at 6.00

CHANNEL 4

- 6.35am Spiff and Hercules (2479702)
- 7.00pm The Big Breakfast (43257)
- 9.00pm You Bet Your Life (r) (s) (27238)
- 9.30pm Schools: Eureka! (587305) 9.45pm Stop Look Listen (5964581) 10.00pm Fourways Farm (7155666) 10.10pm Maths Everywhere (1253412) 10.25pm Eurokids (1253867) 10.40pm Oil Limits (801528) 11.05pm Schools at Work (6201702) 11.11pm Time for Maths (6853783) 11.22pm Stage One (6840219) 11.40pm Time Capsule (4484957)
- 12.00pm The Secret Life of... The Word Processor (r) (30702)
- 12.30pm Sesame Street (83035)
- 1.30pm The Magic Roundabout (r), followed by The Wombles, Paddington, The Clangers and Tennyson's classic Clobber's Ballet Ache (55509)
- 2.00pm Waterways. Dick Warner continues his journey from Dublin to Limerick (r). (Teletext) (6455883)
- 2.35pm FILM: Carlton-Browne of The F.O. (1959, b/w). Satirical comedy with Terry-Thomas as a monumentally inept Foreign Office diplomat. With Peter Sellers, Ian Gamm and Raymond Huntley. (Teletext) (4083358)
- 4.15pm Countdown (s) (Teletext) (4350162)
- 5.00pm Whose News? Deadline (r) (s) (Teletext) (5054)
- 5.30pm Undercover Britain: Hell on Wheels (r). (Teletext) (832)
- 6.00pm Blossom: Your New Planet Blossom makes a videotape for Tony and Shelly's unborn baby (s) (Teletext) (883)
- 6.30pm Happy Days: Great Expectations. Fun with The Forz (r). (s) (335)
- 7.00pm Channel 4 News and Weather (Teletext) (644306)
- 7.50pm You Don't Know Me But... A celebrity receives an unsolicited message (s) (604122)
- 8.00pm Gardens Without Borders: Italy. Alan Mason visits Ken Akers and compares gardening styles in England and Coogna, Italy. (s) (Teletext) (1238)
- 8.30pm Brookside. Who is pregnant? (s) (Teletext) (3073)
- 9.00pm Ellen: Ellen's New Friend. Ellen keeps company with an annoying acquaintance to wangle an important invitation (s) (Teletext) (4783)
- 9.30pm Rising Damp. Boarding house comedy (r) (Teletext) (69702)
- 10.00pm Roseanne. Roseanne exploits David's romantic interest in a waitress (s) (Teletext) (31431)
- 10.30pm The Jack Dee Show (r) (s) (Teletext) (987851)



Rapper Ice-T and Andrea Oliver (11.05pm)

- 11.05pm [CHOICE] Badass TV (s) (754615)
- 11.35pm Beavis and Butt-Head. Juvenile delinquents have fun. (s) (343756)
- 12.05am FILM: Always (1985) starring and directed by Henry Jaglom. Comedy about a couple, soon to be divorced, who spend a cathartic weekend with two other couples (303555)
- 2.00pm FILM: Tell Me Lies (1968). Collage of anti-Vietnam songs, reconstruction and acted episodes in black and white and colour. Directed by Peter Brook. Ends at 4.05 (122335826)

VARIATIONS

- ANGLIA**
As London except: 8.55am-10.00am Anglia News (814374) 12.20pm-12.30pm Anglia News (1902346) 1.55pm The Young Doctors (7047412) 2.20-2.30pm Murder, She Wrote (952619) 3.25-3.30pm Murder, She Wrote (952619) 5.10-5.40pm Shortland Street (6536238) 6.25-7.00pm Anglia Evening followed by Anglia News (1901870) 10.30pm Anglia News (80421) 11.00pm Anglia News (80421) 11.30pm Anglia News (80421) 11.55pm Anglia News (80421) 12.00pm Anglia News (80421) 12.30pm Anglia News (80421) 12.55pm Anglia News (80421) 1.00pm Anglia News (80421) 1.30pm Anglia News (80421) 1.55pm Anglia News (80421) 2.20pm Anglia News (80421) 2.45pm Anglia News (80421) 3.10pm Anglia News (80421) 3.35pm Anglia News (80421) 3.55pm Anglia News (80421) 4.20pm Anglia News (80421) 4.45pm Anglia News (80421) 5.10pm Anglia News (80421) 5.35pm Anglia News (80421) 6.00pm Anglia News (80421) 6.25pm Anglia News (80421) 6.50pm Anglia News (80421) 7.15pm Anglia News (80421) 7.40pm Anglia News (80421) 8.05pm Anglia News (80421) 8.30pm Anglia 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WARNE HOPES TO PUT WEST INDIES INTO A SPIN.

SPORT

FRIDAY MARCH 31 1995

LONDON MARATHON 38
DORRE SEEKS TO KEEP UP HER WINNING STREAK

Forme world heavyweight champion confirms return to ring King to promote Tyson's cause

By SPENCER SEN
BOXING CORRESPONDENT

MIKE TYSON is to carry on boxing and carry on working with the promoter, Don King, making his first public comments since being released from prison last Saturday after serving three years for rape, the former world heavyweight champion said yesterday in Cleveland that he wanted to be associated with the "biggest and the best" and therefore King was his man. He said that his managers would be John Horne and Rory Holloway.

Wearing a black suit, Tyson gave the press conference the kind of treatment he reserved for some of his opponents. The conference lasted only 76 seconds, not much longer than some of his quicker knockouts. Tyson said: "In the last three years I have had the chance to reflect on my life as well as develop my mind and I will continue my journey to make myself a better person so I can help others. But I am here today to make a statement about my profession."

"There's been a lot of speculation about my plans and here they are. I will fight again and I want to confirm John Horne and Rory Holloway as my managers. I also will confirm that Don King will continue to promote my fights. Don is the greatest promoter in the world, as we know, and I have chosen Showtime to be my television network. I have enjoyed my relationship with them both as a boxer and boxing commentator."

"I have decided also to fight at the new MGM Grand to associate myself with the biggest and the best and I look forward to working with them and seeing you. May Allah bless you."

Then, without giving the press a chance to ask him questions, Tyson turned and walked back to the waiting black limousine that had brought him to the arena from his home in Southington. The statement cleared up reports of Tyson severing his connections with King. The promoter was not present. He was in Florida because his wife, Henrietta, is ill.



Tyson reads his 76-second statement, his first comments in public since his release from prison, in Cleveland yesterday

Tyson, who is now 28, did not mention when he hopes to return to the ring for what could be a series of some of the richest bouts in the history of boxing.

Tyson will probably have his first bout, an easy one to show the public that he has

not lost his old power, by the end of this year. It is thought that he will take six months to get back into gym trim. The most likely opponent is Peter McNeeley, who is not expected to last more than a couple of rounds if anyone approximating the old Tyson takes to the ring.

The next opponent is likely to be Frans Botha, of South Africa. It is expected to be the first of the "mega-money fights" and could be staged in South Africa. That will probably be followed by other soft bouts, one of which could be a world title bout against Frank Bruno. A contest with George Foreman could gross \$100 million, and Tyson could be undisputed champion again by the end of 1996.

Tyson's decision will come as a blow to King's competitors. King has two champions under his control, Oliver McCall and the winner of the World Boxing Association championship bout between Tony Tucker and Bruce Seldon. Riddick Bowe and Lennox Lewis wait their turn. Bowe, who is not rated by any of the world governing

bodies, went with his manager, Rock Newman, to see Tyson in prison to sound him out about a match that could gross \$200 million. The talks went well but Bowe, who has fallen out of favour with King for not joining him, may have to wait for anything up to two years. However, the public will demand the bout and it is bound to happen if nothing

contract with Showtime, the American cable company.

Tyson did not name his trainer, so it must be assumed that he will be George Benton, the man who has been engaged to train King's stable of boxers. But Bill Cayton, who used to be Tyson's manager, believes that Tyson, realising that he needs the old Cus D'Amato philosophy to find

visited Mike many times in prison and kept up a regular correspondence with him. He wrote him over 400 letters. I believe in a couple of weeks he'll announce he's called in Steve."

During his training, Tyson will also have to keep in mind his probation officer, Dennis Almasi, who will be seeing that he keeps to the constraints placed on him by the court during the probation period of four years. Almasi said he was forbidden by law to talk about Tyson's case or to have any relationship with him beyond a professional one. But he said Tyson will get no special treatment. The Muslim influence on Tyson should help him to re-establish himself in the eyes of the law and his supporters.

Matthew Saad Muhammad, a former light-heavyweight champion who attended the news conference, said how fast Tyson can get back into fighting shape "depends on his sincerity. It may take six months, it may take three months and it depends on who he's going to fight."

Nigel Benn's next opponent could be Richie Woodhall, the Commonwealth and European middleweight champion (Srikumar Sen writes). Mickey Duff, Woodhall's manager, is having talks with Frank Warren about matching the two on the world heavyweight title bill in July when Frank Bruno meets the winner of the bout between Oliver McCall and Larry Holmes. Woodhall could also try for the World Boxing Organisation title vacated by Steve Collins after his victory over Chris Eubank or the World Boxing Council crown held by Julian Jackson.

untoward happens to Bowe in the meantime.

While Tyson was in prison, King took care to see that Tyson would be rated No 1 after one bout by the three main world organisations. This would enable Tyson to unify the title quickly. King also lined up a \$300 million

his old form, will call another press conference in another couple of weeks to announce the appointment of another trainer with the D'Amato connection, Steve Lotte.

"No one knows Mike like Steve," Cayton said. "He looked after him and was always in his corner. He had

Days of hit and myth are over

Simon Barnes bowls along to the swinging debate that delivers some physical answers

Physics: the only human pursuit that can take us in half a dozen questions from the fall of an apple to the mind of God. Or any other imponderable that you care to consider: how the universe began; when it will end; and what Michael Atherton may have been doing with that cricket ball.

Yesterday, the Institute of Physics, during its annual congress at Telford, gave itself up to the physics of sport. There, amid talk of torque, lift co-efficient and fluid mechanics, surrounded by pleasant remarks like "and, of course, to get displacement you divide by omega squared", we considered, among many other matters, the plight of the dimpleless golf ball and the realities of reverse swing.

Let's get physical, then. One of cricket's myths — and their name is legion — is that nobody has ever been able to explain why a cricket ball swings. Nonsense. Dr Rabin-dra Mehta is perfectly able to explain it and, as a bonus, whether a ball tampering works: "Oh, you bet it works." It is all to do with the air around the ball, whether it is laminar or turbulent. If you can create a differential between these two, if you can

"trip the boundary layer", as Mehta has it, you will make a cricket ball swing.

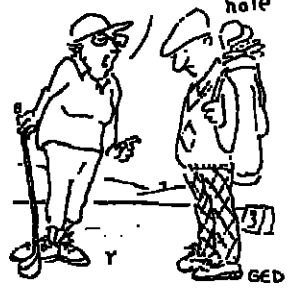
To roughen one side of the ball is of tripping that boundary layer. In other words, reverse swing works. And it has nothing to do with the myth of making one side of the ball heavier.

"The Atherton business," Mehta began. "The naughty thought occurred to me that positive roughness is just as effective as negative roughness." In other words, sticking bits onto a ball is just as good as scraping this off. Sticking dirt on a ball, scratching it with a bottle top — both work.

Another of the myths that Mehta squashed was that of late swing. A cricket ball swings evenly throughout its flight, he said. The illusion of late swing is simply a question of the batsman's perception. The more the bowler bowls wicket to wicket, the later the batsman perceives lateral movement.

Extraordinary. And the day was full of stuff like that. A party of very politic beards, gathering to discuss serious

Perfect aerodynamics... back spin, fades, slices etc: one small problem... it's just too big for the hole

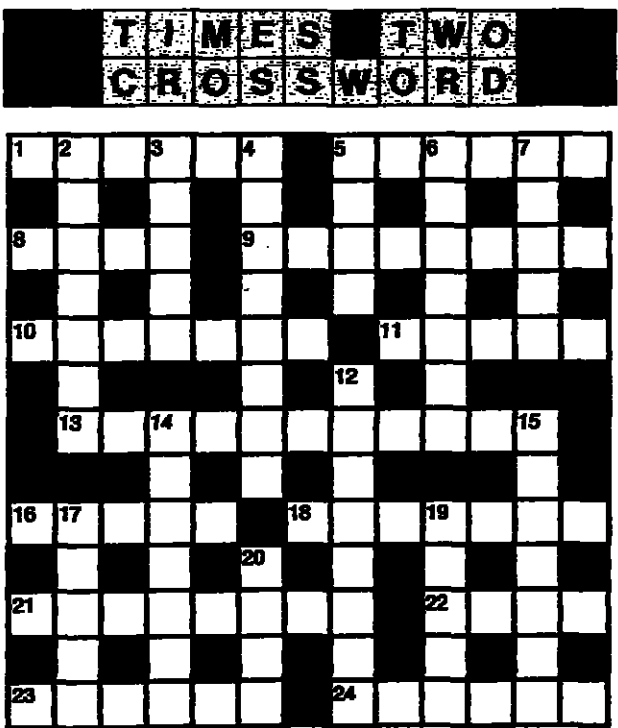


matters in an odd country where hard fact and wild whimsy seem to overlap. It is odd how golf has struck up so warm a relationship with physics, an emphatic contrast to cricket. Money available for research might just have something to do with it, but perhaps golf has an obsession with solutions.

Back to fluid mechanics and boundary layers: hit a normal, dimpled golf ball with your best shot and it goes, say, 250 yards; play the same shot with a dimple-free ball and it goes just 60 yards.

The aerodynamics of the bicycle. The first 90 degrees of the golf swing. Modelling for an improved cricket bat. Cricket holds its myths very dear. Perhaps it prefers that it should be forever unexplained, rather than pared of ambiguity in the laboratory. So let us demolish a modern, rather than an ancient, myth. The weight of a cricket bat is relatively unimportant. What counts is bat speed. Wristy shots with whiplash hands are physically as effective as any shot with a 4lb blaster.

Final thought. Two things the intellectual takes pride in: ignorance of sport, and ignorance of all science, especially physics. Why?



No 434

ACROSS

- 1 Shaping tool; cheat (6)
- 5 Turn into (6)
- 8 Collar fastener; breeding farm (4)
- 9 Impudence (8)
- 10 Wander (of river) (7)
- 11 Tobacco for inhaling (5)
- 13 Insidious intrusion, the original "Greek gift" (6,5)
- 16 Russian holiday home (5)
- 18 Mouldable; modern payment method (7)
- 21 First moon-landing mission (6,2)
- 22 Bearing, manner (4)
- 23 Short sleep (6)
- 24 Toast; well condition (6)

DOWN

- 2 Place of particular responsibility (3,4)
- 3 Portable chair; US car (5)
- 4 Type of Protestant (8)
- 5 Swelling; catch the boat ahead (4)
- 6 Holder of inquest (7)
- 7 Distinctive (artistic) theme (5)
- 12 Immature (8)
- 14 The jealous Moor (7)
- 15 Urgent, demanding (7)
- 17 Quivering poplar (5)
- 19 Brazilian dance (5)
- 20 Rounded, projecting (body) piece (4)

SOLUTION TO NO 433

- ACROSS: 1 Appal 4 Buckram 8 Marmalade 9 Mug 10 Dug 11 Etiquette 12 Inept 13 Radio 16 Chartered 18 Rug 20 Bug 21 Humiliate 22 Sweater 23 Get in
- DOWN: 1 Aimed 2 Pirogue 3 Leave it at that 4 Brazil 5 Chequered flag 6 Remit 7 Magpheto 12 Incubus 14 Defiant 15 Primer 17 Argue 19 Green

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